



















Yours for Progress,  
Will J. Edwards.



# Spiritualism

AND THE

# Catholic Church

Being a Discussion

BY

WILL J. ERWOOD

AND

REV. F. J. FLANNAGAN



*Published by Will J. Erwood*

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"Lessons of Progress," Etc.*

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# FOREWORD



Early in June, 1911, the writer was in Wheeling, W. Va., to which city he had gone in response to the invitation of the Rev. Geo. W. Way and his band of earnest workers. During this stay a series of meetings were held in Wheeling and vicinity, in which the writer delivered the addresses and Rev. Way gave the spiritual messages. Among the points visited was Moundsville, W. Va., where two services were held in the School Auditorium, on the evenings of June 7 and 8.

Prior to these services, two of the Moundsville clergymen had made bold to attack Spiritualism, delivering "lectures" in which they attempted to show that Spiritualism was a detriment to humanity in general, and a product of the "Prince of Darkness" in particular.

As a result of the reports of these "lectures" appearing in the local papers, thereby holding the subject up to ridicule by those who read, but did not know that there was another side to the question, there was, naturally, considerable displeasure on the part of the earnest Spiritualists of Moundsville and vicinity. The Spiritualists were therefore very anxious that a series of

meetings be held in order that the public might have a chance to hear the other side, and arrangements were made for the services alluded to. The gentlemen who had charge of the arrangements caused to be printed in the announcement the following clause:

“Those in charge cordially invite all to attend, especially ministers, and desire especially that Dr. Riker and Father Flannagan attend and ask questions, as they recently delivered lectures on Spiritualism.”

It is needless to say that neither of the gentlemen referred to attended. Dr. Riker remained silent, but Father Flannagan, with the belligerency which his name would indicate, construed the notice as a challenge; and in consequence, the good father sent a series of questions to the Moundsville *Echo*, which he prefaced as follows:

“In your issue of the 4th inst, you published an announcement that appears from one view to be an invitation to discuss Spiritism,” and requested those in charge of the Spiritualist lecture to answer thru the same columns.

Of course the questions were answered. The discussion was extended over a period of weeks, with many delays, owing to the fact that the writer was in and out of Wheeling in persuance of the work that called him there. But the letters were all answered, and nothing but the greatest courtesy was accorded the writer by the

publishers of the *Echo*. There was but one point in which the writer was at a disadvantage, and that was owing to distance he did not get the news as quickly as Father Flannagan, and therefore did not know in advance when the discussion was to be closed by the *Echo*.

The discussion caused much interest, and I believe it was a most excellent thing from every point of view. Many requests have been made that the subject matter be put out in book form and this the writer agreed to do. Labor of many kinds have delayed this, until the present hour. Then, too, the writer had intended to write much more and add to that which is here presented, but when the old scrap book was gotten out and the material made ready for the printer, it was found the volume would be sufficiently large as it was, without adding more to make it cumbersome and unwieldy.

Much data has been gathered which would splendidly supplement this volume—in fact so much that it would make another book as large, if not larger, than the present publication. To do the work that such data will accomplish, the writer here agrees to get the material ready for, and publish another book supplementing this, in the interest of education and liberal religion.

In sending this book forth there is no desire to arouse religious animosity or dissention; nor is there any wish to antagonize or attack any



church, Catholic or otherwise. It is prompted by the desire to let both sides of the discussion be freely heard; by the further wish to promote rational free speech, and provide reasonable defense of a religion which numbers among its adherents some of the best and most brilliant men and women in the world. And, still further, by the desire to show to the world that the time has come when one religionist can no longer assail the dearest convictions of another and remain unanswered.

WILL J. ERWOOD.

Philadelphia, Pa., June, 1917.

## Spiritualist Lecture

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Rev. Erwood will give a lecture at the Victoria Theater, Wheeling, Sunday afternoon, June 4, at 2 o'clock, on "Foregleams of Immortality; or, What Becomes of the Dead."

The same subject will be discussed at Moundsville in one of his lectures. He will lecture in the school hall on June 7 and 8, and Rev. Way, of Wheeling will follow each lecture with spirit messages.

Those in charge cordially invite all to attend, especially ministers, and desire especially that Rev. Father Flanagan and Dr. Riker attend and ask questions, as they recently delivered lectures on Spiritualism.



# Questions on Spiritism

## In Answer to Recent Invitation

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO."

DEAR SIR:

In your issue of the 4th inst. you published an announcement that appears, from one view, to be an invitation to discuss Spiritism. The last paragraph of the article is as follows: "Those in charge cordially invite all to attend, especially ministers, and desire especially that Rev. Father Flanagan and Dr. Riker attend and ask questions, as they recently delivered lectures on Spiritualism."

It is true I recently delivered a lecture on Spiritism. A synopsis of my address appeared in the daily papers. I gave a general outline of the whole subject, and proved that Spiritism is identified with the old magic and the necromancy of olden times. I maintained that much of the phenomena of Spiritism cannot have

any adequate cause in man, but only in spirits distinct from the souls of all those visibly present on such occasions. I also said that neither God nor His angels, nor the souls in heaven, could be expected to put themselves at the disposal of the mediums to satisfy a morbid curiosity; and, therefore, the reasonable conclusion was that the evil spirits or demons, are the agents of all such effects in Spiritism which cannot be attributed to human powers.

Now, Mr. Editor, if those in charge of the Spiritualist lecture, announced in your paper, are in a position to answer the following questions let them do so through your columns.

## QUESTIONS

1.—If it is really true, that the souls of our departed friends manifest themselves in the singular ways, in which the Spiritists say they do, how is it that Spiritism has never served to enlighten us on intricate historical questions, to settle some question of language, to



solve some scientific problem, to recognize unknown maladies, or to reveal special remedies?

2.—If Spiritism is a blessing to mankind, why does the practice of it produce in the persons of the mediums, a deadening or morbid exaggeration of the mental faculties, and cause the most serious of organic nervous diseases?

3.—Spiritists themselves admit that the practice of Spiritism is fraught with many dangers to the sensitive, because of the intervention of malicious and spiteful spirits. How can mediums and sitters ever be safe against the intervention and actions of these malicious and spiteful spirits?

4.—If Spiritism is helpful to us, how do you explain the fact that the majority of the most famous mediums, and not a few who have been assiduous cultivators of Spiritistic practices, have died insane, neurotic, or committed suicide?

5.—If the spirits of our departed are interested in our welfare, and if they really communicate with us in the Spirit-

istic seance, why do they find pleasure in playing silly and foolish tricks on us?

6.—Is it not a serious flaw in your Spiritistic creed and philosophy that even the highest orders of spirits differ, and that hopelessly, in their descriptions of the conditions in the other world?

7.—Why is there such inconsistencies, incoherencies, and contradictions in a communicating spirit's account of himself?

8.—Why so much oblivion and error about things which it seems inconceivable that the real spirit, supposed to be communicating, should have forgotten or be mistaken about?

9.—Why is it so difficult, as is well known by all experienced experimenters, to establish the identity of the manifesting intelligences?

10.—Why do we meet with Newmans who cannot mention a single title of the books they have written? Why do we find Shakespeares and Newtons who have become, in the spheres of the spirits, hopeless idiots and imbeciles?

11.—Is not your Spiritistic creed utterly and wholly incompatible with, and manifestly antagonistic to, the teaching of Holy Scripture and the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ?

F. J. FLANAGAN.



# Answers to Questions on Spiritualism

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Without entering into the discussion in any other way or to any greater extent, the *Echo* submits this in explanation: Mr. Erwood is evidently not informed as to why Rev. Father Flanagan submitted the "Questions on Spiritism." They were written in reply to an invitation or request from the gentleman who arranged for Mr. Erwood's recent lectures in Moundsville, which request or invitation, as one may choose to call it, was handed the *Echo* in writing and published. Therefore Rev. Flanagan replied in like manner.—EDITOR "ECHO."

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO,"  
Moundsville, W. Va.

DEAR SIR:

My attention has been called to the articles: "Questions on Spiritism" over the signature of Father F. A. Flanagan, and the synopsis of his lecture on "Spiritualism," appearing in recent issues of your paper.

Inasmuch as you have given him the opportunity of expressing himself through the *Echo*, I feel assured you will not hesitate to grant me sufficient space in



which to make brief reply. On general principles I am opposed to religious discussions; this from the fact that they usually do no more than inflame the minds of the ignorant and intolerant. And I always feel it a departure from the avocation and dignity of the real minister when a deliberate attack is made upon the religion of another. There is work nearer home for the clergy.

In reading the preamble to Father Flanagan's "Questions," and the report of his lecture on Spiritualism it is quite apparent to me that his personal experience with Spiritualism, as far as its phenomena and its philosophy are concerned, must be very limited — very meagre to say the least.

Father Flanagan says: " \* \* \* neither God nor His angels, nor the souls in heaven, could be expected to put themselves at the disposal of the mediums to satisfy morbid curiosity." This one quotation is quite sufficient to show how widely he has missed the essence of the philosophy of Spiritualism. Spiritualists

at no time claim that God, His angels, nor yet the souls of the departed are at the disposal of mediums. If he knows aught of our position he must know that we are emphatic in the statement that the medium has no power to compel the return of any soul.

Furthermore, if there is one thing that is more abhorrent, to the real Spiritualist, than another, it is morbidity, idle curiosity, or a flippant, irreverent attitude toward, or approach to, intercommunion between the discarnate and the human on earth.

Father Flanagan presumes much when he tells us what God and His angels, or the souls in heaven "could be expected to do." This particularly when his own theology has taught him and his parishioners to expect so much from God, His angels and souls in heaven. One has but to read the many works anent the lives of the Saints, or the evolution of the Catholic Church and her work, to discover what an important part has been played—in the opinion of the teachers

and adherents of Catholicism—by God, His angels, the souls in heaven, and even those in purgatory.

Not only do they—the Catholics—believe in the marvelous stories of miracles in the lives of ancient members of the church, but they believe that these things obtain today. The dead are not wholly separated from the living; departed mothers and fathers may administer to their loved on earth. As a witness to this we have the *Calendar*, published for the diocese of Wheeling, the issue for April, 1909. On page 2 of this issue there is an account of Father Flanagan's lecture on Spiritualism, delivered at Huntington \* \* \*—delivered also recently at Moundsville.

In this lecture he tells his audience that Spiritualism may be defined as, "communication with and consulting of the spirits of the departed," etc. Yes, we believe in that, but that is but a small part of Spiritualism; there is an ethical side that is worthy the attention of the most enlightened.

Turning from his lecture, in which he assures us that, "evil spirits or demons are the agents of all such effects in Spiritism which cannot be attributed to human power"—he forgot to inform his auditors that the word demon has a dual meaning—turning from this lecture to page 7 of the same issue of the *Calendar*, above mentioned, we are greeted by this interesting caption: "*A Mother's Love That Ceased Not With Death.*"

The story that follows, written by the pastor of "St. Michael's"—name of city not given—tells of the return of the deceased mother of a young man *three years after her demise*. And it concludes with these words: "Convinced was I that a mother's interest, and a mother's love ceased not with death."

Father Flanagan, that is precisely what is taught by Spiritualism. The priest who wrote the item very evidently believes in the return of the departed; and the history of the Catholic Church is teeming with similar incidents. All good Catho-



lics believe in such occurrences. Are we to conclude that the love of a Catholic mother is more earnest and devoted than that of a Spiritualist mother? That her interest in her children is greater?

Father Flanagan says: "I proved that Spiritism is identified with the old magic and the necromancy of olden times."—I abridge for want of space—he did not prove anything of the kind. He merely proved that he made use of certain texts, opinions, prejudices, etc., to discourage his people from investigating this subject. He well knows that if he wished to impress them with the truth and probability of a mother's return—as per account in the *Calendar*—he could very easily turn to the same Scripture and find convenient texts with which to do so.

He knows, too, that he could prove that some of those demons, of which he speaks so glibly, were wise, beneficent and good. This because he knows the term has been used for centuries to signify "the spirit of a dead man, either



good or bad." Then, too, he might have defined necromancy and given his people to understand its significance.

As for the questions Father Flanagan has propounded. They sound like the old "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" query. Were he familiar with the literature of Spiritualism to any extent he would know of the mass of literature, which has grown up in the last half century, in which are statements which were ridiculed thirty years ago, but which are now recognized by the scientific world. Particularly is this true in psychological studies. Father Flanagan knows of the change in the psychology of today from that of a few years ago.

As for healing, the curing and understanding of diseases which have baffled the best physicians; there are countless numbers of cures effected by laying on of hands, psychic diagnosis and spirit ministration. They are almost daily occurrences.

Then he speaks of "deadening or morbid exaggeration of the mental faculties

and organic nervous disease” as a result of “the practice of Spiritism.” I think Father Flanagan will yet find there are some who have been “Spiritists” for many years whose mental faculties are neither “deadened” nor “morbidly exaggerated.” This question is a joke, in view of the fact that I see before me in the *Calendar* an advertisement of “Father Koenig’s Nerve Tonic.”

Of this remedy, for *nerves*, mind you, Father J. J. Riorden says—after talking about hard mission life bringing on “restlessness, nervousness, sleeplessness,” etc.—and you know, Father, restlessness, nervousness, sleeplessness, etc., are the roads that lead to suicide, insanity and its kindred ills. Father Riorden says: “There is no doubt Pastor Koenig’s Nerve Tonic is most valuable for all such cases, and my own experience gives the most infallible proof of it.” I would ask: if the practice of the rites and ceremonials of Catholicism be such a benefit why the need of Father Koenig’s Nerve Tonic?

Yes, we admit that there is danger in the indiscriminate, thoughtless and reckless accentuation of man's psychic power. Why? Because the irrational use of anything is dangerous. The extreme use—the unwise application of the most beneficent power in the universe, is detrimental to humanity. There are people who use everything else unwisely, why not the same here.

How can medium and sitters be safe from evil spirits? That is very simple. Let them be sincere, honest, clean, reverent, earnest; let them take into their investigations that purity of thought which is ever a barrier to evil, in every clime, nation or creed.

Father Flanagan says: "the majority of the most famous mediums and not a few assiduous cultivators of Spiritistic practices have died insane, neurotic, or have committed suicide." He wisely refrains from mentioning the countless number who have not died from any of the above causes. And he is judging from a few isolated cases, and judging

in the same way we could prove that Catholicism was fraught with many grave dangers.

In answer to his question let me say Spiritualists are human beings, liable to the same errors as others. And I have never known a case such as he speaks of where there has not been some vital abuse of physical or mental powers, but, quoting the words of Cardinal Gibbons, "the spots on the sun do not mar his brightness. The cockle that grows amidst the wheat does not destroy the beauty of the ripened harvest." The things you mention, Father Flanagan, as you must know full well, are the accidents that attend the growth of all religious movements.

Why do spirits play silly tricks on us. My own experience does not prove that they do. But supposing this is true at times, I would say it was due to the fact that there are so many silly people, who fail to appreciate the seriousness of soul communion, who approach this subject in a flippant manner and ask of discar-



nate beings such silly questions that they attract those whose highest aim is levity. To the Spiritualist a message from a loved one who has departed this life is a hallowed experience, and venerated as such.

Father Flanagan asks: "Is it not a serious flaw \* \* \* that spirits differ \* \* \* in their descriptions of the other world?" Not at all. There are different stages of development, different temperaments and individuality to be taken into consideration. Would men returning from heaven, purgatory, hell, all describe the other world *exactly* alike? If different descriptions, interpretations were flaws, ours would not be the only system of religion that would suffer. There might be trouble nearer home, Father.

The seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth questions may be answered by the fact that as yet we are in process of development, and that according to the unfoldment of the media shall the communications be clear and lucid, or otherwise.



No claim is made by Spiritualists or other earnest investigators that perfection of methods of communication have been reached. Yet there have been sufficient to convince such men as Richet, Wallace, Crookes, Stead, Hyslop, James and countless men of scientific attainment, of the genuineness of spirit phenomena, and the identity of those communicating.

Difficulty in establishing identity is not a proof of the degeneration of the soul manifesting—it is evidence of the imperfection of the means of communication, due at times to undue haste, to unnecessary eagerness and lack of development.

And now we are asked: “Is not your Spiritistic creed wholly incompatible with and manifestly antagonistic to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ?”

And to this I answer, absolutely no! Our philosophy is as consistent with Scripture as any now extant. The Scripture teems with the account of the min-

istration of men, spirits and angels. Indeed the phenomena of Spiritualism, the real spiritual phenomena which are so dear to us, are more a substantiation of the possibility of such phenomena as are recorded in the Bible, than they are incompatible. They prove a claim long made by your church, better than any other one thing, *i. e.*, the unchangeableness of the Infinite.

As for the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus, we differ on that point. We do not deny the divinity of Jesus—we object to the version that your theology gives to the world. And we object to it on the grounds of incompatibility, inconsistency, unnaturalness, and its being in contradistinction to natural law as manifested throughout the whole of life—the whole of nature. But the divinity of Jesus, and of Father Flanagan, and all humanity, we cheerfully concede.

I am well aware of the fact that Father Flanagan's theology demands for itself the right to depart from the Scripture if need be. I know the Catholic Church

holds that the Bible is not sufficient—that “there is no clear or methodical statement of the teaching of Christ proceeding in regular sequence,” as stated by the Catholic Church, through its clergy—in this they are correct. Also I am aware that Christ wrote nothing, that the Bible was not in its present form until hundreds of years after the transition of Jesus; and further that the New Testament was not written—not a word of it—until many years after his death and reported resurrection.

Now let me close by saying one of the cardinal principles of The National Spiritualist Association is this: “We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule: ‘Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them.’”

And in compliance with this spirit all we ask is that we be accorded the same privileges under the constitution of our country, and the laws of life, that are desired by other denominations. And we suggest that the clergy, both Catholic

and otherwise, keep their hands off—they have quite sufficient to do to keep their own people from insanity, organic nervous disorders, and the thousand and one things from which even churchmen suffer.

Very truly yours,

WILL J. ERWOOD.



# Father Flanagan Replies to Erwood Lecture

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NOTE.—The following letter from Rev. Flanagan was handed to the *Echo* Tuesday afternoon, before the letter of Mr. Erwood was published, but too late to be put in type for that day's paper.—EDITOR "ECHO."

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

May I ask the kind hospitality of your paper, to correct some erroneous impressions, relative to the teachings of the Catholic Church and Spiritism, which the recent lecture on "Spiritualism" delivered by Rev. Erwood, is calculated to produce.

The immediate occasion of my discussing Spiritism through your columns, was the appearance in your issue of the 4th inst. of an invitation or kind of challenge to me from those in charge of a "Spiritualistic lecture" to ask questions about Spiritism. I responded. I asked eleven questions relative to Spiritism.

In a subsequent issue of the *Echo*, Rev.



Erwood promised to answer my questions, in the school hall, last Thursday evening. The people who went to hear Rev. Erwood had a right to expect that he would answer the questions as he had advertised to do so. He answered not; and his failure to keep his promise caused no little surprise. His only answer was: "I am not ready for the questions that appeared in one of your local papers, but will answer them later." I waited several days, before sending you this exposure of Rev. Erwood's peculiar controversial methods, thinking that he would make some attempt to answer my questions. I have waited in vain.

The main purpose of Rev. Erwood's lecture was, seemingly, to prove that the claims of the Spiritists, and the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding spirits, are the same. In support of this contention he read passages from a book written by Rev. Father Gmeiner, called "The Spirits of Darkness and their Manifestations on Earth; or, Ancient and Modern Spiritualism."

Rev. Erwood lacks the qualities of a fair controversialist, for he read isolated passages from the work in question without giving the title of the book, the author's name or the page from which he quoted. After the lecture when requested to produce the book he did so with reluctance. I happen to have a copy of Father Gmeiner's work. From a glance at this book it will easily be seen that Rev. Erwood made a dismal failure of his attempt to prove his claim. In the opening paragraph of his preface the reverend author sets forth the purpose of his book in the following words:

"The main object of the following pages is to defend certain Christian doctrines against two classes of opponents, very numerous in this country: against Materialists, who, like the Sadducees of old, believe neither in angels nor devils; and against modern Spiritualists who imagine that, since the mysterious rappings at Hydesville, N. Y., a new revelation from the Unseen Above, superior to Christianity and des-

tined to supersede it, has dawned upon mankind."

On page 262, in his last chapter, the same author says:

"From all this we see that lying devils are trying to dupe men by pretending to be the spirits of dear friends or of other persons. Hence it is clear why already Moses—Deut. 18 : 11—mentioned the seeking of 'the truth from the dead,' as one of the 'abominations' for which the Lord had decided to have the impious inhabitants of Canaan destroyed by the Israelites. Hence it is also clear why the Bible and the church have always forbidden necromancy, or the practice of consulting the dead. Whoever does so, exposes himself to the danger of being badly deluded by lying devils, and of getting under their influence."

Exasperated, doubtless, by my condemnation of Spiritism involved in the questions I proposed, Rev. Erwood instead of answering them hides behind such rubbish as the following: "I challenge every church from the Roman

Catholic down to tell me where there is a place in the Bible where God said be a Catholic, Methodist, etc., etc.”

The wisest of the sons of men, King Solomon, in his chapter in the Bible on fools—Prov. 26:5—says: “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he imagine himself to be wise.” Having a profound regard for the wisdom of Solomon, I will follow his suggestion in Rev. Erwood’s case and ask him a question of the same trend as his own. Can you, Rev. Erwood, show me a passage in the Bible in which God commands me not to be a Catholic? The lesson which I wish to inject into your head is this: If the Bible is silent about a certain matter, it does not follow that it is forbidden. The logical consequence implied in your question, is that we must do nothing except what is found commanded in the Bible. The mere statement of your position, as indicated by your question, is enough to expose its fallacy.

The Bible does not say, in as many



words, be a Catholic. But it teaches the foundation and authority of the Catholic Church. To wit: "And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matt. 16: 18. "And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."—Matt. 18:17.

Referring to my lecture Rev. Erwood said: "Father Flanagan says that God could not be expected to let your friends come back and speak to you. Men of Father Flanagan's own faith believe they do, for the following story appeared in the *Catholic Calendar* for the month of April, 1909, just after Father Flanagan had delivered his lecture on Spiritualism in Huntington: "Mother Love," written by a priest. This is rather a coincidence that the paper that printed a lecture preached by a priest should also print a story about spirits written by a man of the same faith and same calling."

This is the reply of a disputant who has a weak cause to defend. My exposi-

tion and condemnation of Spiritism, and the story of an apparition referred to in "Mother Love," are not parallel cases. It is one thing to believe that spirits may appear if God permits them, and something else to hold that our departed friends are the authors of all the foolish and silly nonsense of the seance room.

I did say that it would be unworthy of God, who has seen fit to deprive us of the knowledge of many things which Spiritism is said to reveal, to put the souls of our departed friends at the disposal of the mediums to satisfy the curiosity of the sitters, Rev. Erwood in answer to this statement of mine said: "Mediums have no domain over the spirits and unless the friends themselves speak to the medium they cannot get a message." Yet if the friends of the departed come to the medium, he, the medium, may call up the spirits of the departed in response to the wishes of the friends. Is not this putting the souls of the departed at the disposal of the medium and the persons consulting him?



Is not such conduct unworthy of the Almighty, who has through his inspired word declared: "neither let there be found among you any one \* \* \* that seeketh the truth from the dead."—Deut. 18:10-11.

There is only one other statement of Rev. Erwood worthy of notice. It is this: "I know of a priest in Minneapolis or Milwaukee, who when a woman who was a Catholic went to tell him she believed in Spiritualism and knew she could not be a Catholic and a Spiritualist at the same time said to her 'Sister, go right on, by their fruits you shall know them.'"

This is a cowardly subterfuge. I do not believe any Catholic priest, in good standing, ever gave such advise. I challenge Rev. Erwood to give the name and address of the priest he referred to. This information will enable me to write to the priest and ascertain the truth of Rev. Erwood's assertion.

F. J. FLANAGAN.

*June 13, 1911.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

I have read the so-called answers to my questions on Spiritism, published by Rev. Erwood in yesterday's *Echo*. I sent you the above letter before his communication appeared in your columns. In my next letter I shall examine his "answers."

F. J. FLANAGAN.

*June 14, 1911.*



# Reply to Rev. Erwood's Letter

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## In Answering Rev. Father Flanagan's Questions on Spiritism

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

Rev. Erwood has thought it well to undertake to answer my questions on Spiritism. He prefaces his letter with a little homily on 'religious controversy. On general principles, he is opposed to religious discussions. He thinks they inflame the minds of the ignorant and the intolerant. Why then did the Spiritists begin this controversy? Why did Rev. Erwood tell his audience in the school hall last Thursday, that he invited the reverend pastor of one of the Methodist churches and myself to discuss Spiritism? Why do you not refrain from such conduct if you are so much opposed to discussions? Why did you provoke this controversy by your challenge?

Rev. Erwood says: "I always feel it a departure from the avocation and dignity of the real minister when a deliberate attack is made upon the religion of another. There is work nearer home for the clergy."

Yes, Reverend Sir, and the clergy of Moundsville, who spoke against Spiritism, were doing their duty, here at home, by exposing the form of devil worship which you have tried to defend.

Rev. Erwood did you not depart from the "avocation and dignity of a real minister" when you dishonestly tried, during the course of your lecture, to make Father Gmeiner teach doctrines which the very title of his book gives the lie to? Was your conduct in this regard worthy of an honest and upright man? Did you not thereby make a cowardly attack on the Catholic Church? For men of your type, Rev. Erwood, to speak of ministerial dignity, after having been detected in such double-dealing as I have found you guilty of in misrepresenting Catholic doctrines, is but another



case of Satan rebuking sin. Any man who would stoop to such baseness and ascribe, as you have done, on false testimony, opinion to men which they repudiate, should not harp on ministerial dignity.

Rev. Erwood tries to set up a similarity between the Catholic doctrine relative to spirits and the claims of his cult. His authority is a story that appeared in the *Wheeling Church Calendar*. Much of his letter is devoted to this foolish contention which is not to the point. I never denied the doctrine that God could if he wished permit a spirit to return to this earth. Because the *Church Calendar* published a story about a ghost it does not follow Spiritism is the unique revelation which you Spiritists think it is. Nor are we to conclude from this fact that the Catholic Church teaches the doctrines of the Spiritists. Give me something stronger than fiction, Rev. Erwood, if you are going to answer my questions. I have no time for such nonsense. Any honest man would be ashamed of your tactics.

I will try, Mr Editor, to follow Rev. Erwood in his wanderings, after indicating the weakness of his cause by dodging the question, and citing the account of a ghost story, he speaks of demons and necromancy. I used the word demon in the sense in which it has been used by Christian writers from the earliest days of Christianity. A demon is an evil spirit. The word has come to mean the same thing as devil. As for the word necromancy, my audience could readily discern from my explanations, that it is a special mode of divination by the evocation of the dead.

My opponent next speaks of my questions. "They sound like the old 'Can any good come out of Nazareth?' query," he says. His answers, so-called, to these questions sound like Satan's harangue to his cunning associates as described by Milton in "Paradise Lost." The arch enemy of mankind seeing he had lost advised his imps that "their better part remains to work in close design, by fraud or guile." This is exactly what Mr. Erwood

has done. He has resorted to fraud and guile. Instead of giving clear answers to my questions he tells of changes in psychological studies and retires behind a patent medicine advertisement.

The Spiritualistic minister says that diseases that baffled the best physicians have been cured by spirit ministrations. The best physicians in both Europe and America, who have made Spiritism a life's work, hold they have not.

Referring to my questions and lecture in another paragraph Rev. Erwood has this to say: "In reading the preamble to Father Flanagan's questions and the report of his lecture, it is quite apparent that his personal experience with Spiritualism, as far as its phenomena and its philosophy are concerned, must be very limited—very meagre to say the least." If my knowledge of Spiritism is meagre and limited why did you find it necessary to resort to quibbling and sophistry to answer the questions I proposed?

In answer to the question relative to the influence of the evil spirits over the

mediums Rev. Erwood says all that is necessary is that the mediums be sincere, earnest, honest, etc. I am sure Mr. Erwood will not accuse Huston Tuttle, a noted Spiritualistic author and medium, of want of honesty, sincerity and earnestness, during his seances. Nevertheless, Spiritism proved for him, in some instances at least, the source of the greatest possible danger. In his book, "The Arcana of Spiritualism," on page 232, Medium Tuttle speaks of an uncontrollable desire to kill. His words are: "I was sitting with a circle of friends around a large walnut dining-table, which was moving in response to questions. The intelligence claimed to be an Indian, and to the request said he would sketch his own portrait, by my hand. I held a piece of chalk, the size of a small marble, and automatically my hand drew a grotesque portrait. We all laughed and my father, who had quitted the table and seated himself on the opposite side of the room, said, 'It looks like Satan.'"



“Instantly my mind from light and pleasant thoughts, was changed to fierce and unutterable hatred. Anger turned the light to bloody redness, and to kill was an uncontrollable desire, under which my hand threw the chalk with the precision of a bullet, hitting the offender in the center of the forehead, with a force that shivered the chalk in pieces. Had it been larger, serious consequences would certainly have resulted. Of course the seance was at an end, but I did not escape the terrible influence for the evening.

“The study of this seance showed me the danger which menaced the sensitive, and gave the key to a class of crimes which hitherto had remained inexplicable.”

On page 233, of the book above mentioned, Mr. Tuttle calls attention to *Suicidal Obsession* in the following words:

“While sitting in a circle at the home of the venerable Dr. Underhill I was for the time in an almost unconcious state, and recognized the presence of several Indian spirits. The roar of the Cuyahoga



river over the rapids could be heard in the still evening air, and to my sensitive ear was very distinct. Suddenly I was seized with the desire to rush away to the rapids, and throw myself into the river. As I started up someone caught hold of me, and aroused me out of the impressible state I was in, so that I gained control of myself. Had the state been more profound, and I had once started, the end might have been different. The desire remained all the evening."

Does not the experience of Mr. Tuttle, Mr. Erwood, prove as I said, that notwithstanding the aim and purpose of the mediums or the experimenters, they are never free from the influence of wicked and malicious spirits, and that these may at any time cause such feelings and desires to kill or commit suicide. It will not do to say the desire to kill was felt because the sitters laughed, or the suicidal obsession was brought about because of the influences of sitting in promiscuous circles.

My reverend friend objects to my statements anent the dangers of Spiritism, and the evil effects of it. Dr. Godfrey Raupert, who was a Spiritualist himself, and an unprejudiced and earnest inquirer into the phenomena of Spiritism, after treating of various dangers surrounding Spiritism, says: "All these things considered, it seems to me that some of the experiences of an unprejudiced and independent inquirer, who has himself passed through many of these dangers, and who entered upon the inquiry with no kind of bias or preconceptions, might prove helpful to many thoughtful minds at this present time. They present an aspect of this much-debated subject which is not very readily and willingly exposed to view by Spiritualists, but at which it is, nevertheless, of the utmost importance that fair-minded persons should take a good full look." "The Dangers of Spiritualism," pages 11 and 12.

Dr. Raupert's book teems with example after example of the dangers of Spiritism. For further information on the question

I refer Mr. Erwood to the testimony of other Spiritualists, viz.: Henry M. Huguin in his work "Spirit Possession," and teachings of Dr. B. F. Hatch in "Spiritualism Unveiled."

In answer to question No. 5, regarding the silly tricks of the spirits, Mr. Erwood tells us spirits give silly answers because there are so many silly people who approach this subject in a flippant manner, etc.

But what has he to say of the celebrated scientist who conducted their experiments in good faith? They frequently received silly answers to grave questions.

That the spirits give conflicting accounts of the other world does not seem a grave flaw in the spiritistic philosophy to Mr. Erwood. How then are you to know when you have the right view of the hereafter, since the spirits are your guides and teachers and they differ hopelessly in their teachings?

My seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth questions Rev. Erwood answers by saying that as yet Spiritualism is in process

of development, and he does not claim perfection for the spirits. He also mentions the names of scientists who have professed belief in the spirit phenomena and the identity of the spirit communicating.

You are wrong, Rev. Erwood. The reliable and cautious scientists who have examined the spiritistic phenomena and testified to their reality, have not committed themselves further than to declare that these phenomena must be attributed to intelligent agents. They do not assert, as you try to say they do, that they believe in the identity of the communicating spirit.

Why did you not answer my seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth questions without quibbling? Your theory of development is too thin.

In treating of the difficulty in establishing the identity of a spirit, Medium Erwood maintains that "it is due at times to undue haste, to unnecessary eagerness and lack of development."

How then is one sure when in the



seance room that he is communicating with his dear dead friends? What assurance have people on such occasions that they are not being duped by lying spirits?

My opponent also asserts that Spiritism is not opposed to the teachings of Holy Scripture and the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest mediums that ever lived, Mr. Stanton Moses, wrote a book called "Spirit Teaching." This book holds among Spiritists a position not unlike that of the Bible among Christians. A quotation from "Spirit Teaching" will prove that Spiritism is manifestly antagonistic to the teachings of Scripture and the divinity of Jesus Christ. On page 70 of "Spirit Teaching" we read:

"We would have you know that the spiritual idea of Jesus, the Christ, is no more like the human notion, with its accessories of atonement and redemption, as men have grasped them, than was the calf, ignorantly carved by the ancient Hebrews, like to God who strove to reveal Himself to them."



I could fill your whole paper, Mr. Editor, with like passages from Spiritualistic writers in support of my assertion.

The only remaining portions of Rev. Erwood's "answers" worthy of consideration are the last two paragraphs of his letter.

He quotes the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them." Very good, sir. But why did you not observe this rule? Why did you through your agent challenge me to discuss Spiritism?

In concluding his epistle the good and gentle Spiritualistic minister, with his exalted ideas of ministerial dignity, and his highly warped notions of fair controversy, speaks of privileges which the Constitution guarantees him. He suggests that the clergy, Catholic and otherwise, keep their hands off, and keep their own people from insanity, etc.

I never denied to you or any of your cult, any of your privileges or rights. If you Spiritists are satisfied to be duped by lying spirits who masquerade as the souls

of the dead, I have no quarrel with you on that score. I respect your conscience, if you have a conscience, but when you challenge me through the press to discuss Spiritism, or deny my right to expose its errors, then I claim the right of defending myself.

F. J. FLANAGAN.

Moundsville, W. Va., *June 15, 1911.*

## Rev. Erwood Replies to Father Flanagan

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO."

DEAR SIR:

With your kind permission I would like to answer Father Flanagan's letters in recent issues of the *Echo*. I regret that absence from the city made it impossible for me to give these letters immediate attention. I dare say Father Flanagan has construed the delay to mean that his latest effusions have thoroughly disheartened us. But it would require better arguments than he has yet produced to dispose of Spiritualism or Spiritualists.

Father Flanagan's letter concerning my lecture in Moundsville is so manifestly unreliable that all fair-minded people who attended that lecture will see through it at once. But those who were not in attendance may have been misled

by his statements, and it is to those I address myself at present.

In his letter of June 14 this "fair controversialist" waxes dramatically indignant over what he is pleased to term my: "peculiar controversial methods," which he proudly claims to have "exposed." All of this comes with ill grace from a man whose only knowledge of that lecture comes from a garbled report, couched in language the very construction of which disposes of its reliability.

Father Flanagan has, no doubt inadvertently, misrepresented the matter when he accuses the Spiritualists of inaugurating this controversy. He says: "The immediate occasion of my discussing Spiritism through your columns was the appearance \* \* \* of an invitation or kind of challenge to me from those in charge of a Spiritualistic lecture to ask questions."

Thus he accuses the Spiritualist of starting the controversy. He conveniently forgets his own attack on Spirit-

ualism in the lecture delivered by him, in the school auditorium, prior to my visit there. Perhaps he thinks that was not an attack. Being a "fair controversialist" Father Flanagan would not take advantage of the situation when there was no one there to answer him—nor would he read an isolated passage from any book. (?)

Then he gives a wrong view of the invitation in the *Echo*; he would have his people believe that he had been singled out for attack. If the readers of the *Echo* will turn to the June 4 issue, they will find that the gentleman who had charge of the arrangements invited all ministers to attend, adding that since Father Flanagan and Rev. Riker had recently lectured on Spiritualism, they were especially invited to be present and ask questions. (I quote from memory here as I have not a copy of that issue.)

I am told that Father Flanagan said he would be there Thursday night; that he was a man of his word and would be



present. But he was not there. Then he says: "I asked eleven questions relative to Spiritism," and adds: "in a subsequent issue of the *Echo*, Rev. Erwood promised to answer my questions, in the school hall, last Thursday night." Will Father Flanagan produce that "subsequent issue"—I would like to see "my promise." Yes, indeed, Father Flanagan is a "fair controversialist." I made no such promise.

Then he says: "The people who went to hear Rev. Erwood had a right to expect that he would answer the questions as he had advertised to do." Did they, indeed? Father Flanagan knows he requested an answer through the columns of the *Echo*. Read his questions and see what he has to say, viz., "if those in charge \* \* \* can answer these questions let them do so in these columns." Thus it is plain the people had no right to expect an answer elsewhere unless Father Flanagan had been present.

Father Flanagan's knowledge of the

lecture is entirely "hearsay" evidence—based principally on the imperfect report rendered by a young stenographer who frankly admitted that she was unable to get a full report of that lecture. At least I have been led to believe that she was trying to get a report for our absentee questioner. And how imperfect the reports received by him is apparent by the substance of his letters.

Father Flanagan quotes me as saying: "I am not ready for the questions that appeared in one of your local papers." And my auditors know full well that this is incorrect. I said "I will answer the questions in the paper; I consider them very simple indeed."

In his eagerness to prove me unfair he accuses me of reading "isolated passages," and an attempt to conceal the name of the book, etc. In the course of my lecture I read from more than twenty pages of the book, "Spirits of Darkness," stating as I did so that it was written against Spiritualism, by a priest of the Milwaukee diocese. He says: "after the

lecture when requested to produce the book he did so with reluctance."

Now, let us see as to that. After the lecture a member of Father Flanagan's church asked to see the book, which I immediately handed him in the presence of a dozen persons. When he read the title page and saw that it was printed by "Hoffman Bros. Printers to The Holy Apostolic See," he was much perturbed, and declared he did not believe the book to have been published with the sanction of a priest, and doubted that Hoffman Bros. were official printers, etc.

The sight of the book must have disturbed his memory greatly, for despite the fact that he saw the book, read its title page, etc., and conferred with the young lady who had attempted to take notes, he was unable to inform Father Flanagan as to the name of the book; on the following—Friday—morning the young lady telephoned me and asked the name of the volume, which I gave her, also telling her the name of publishers, and city in which book was published.

Had I been trying to conceal all of this that was my chance.

I very cheerfully admit that Father Gmiener wrote his book against Spiritualism, but this is a fact which in no way proves that he made a good case against it. Indeed his case against Spiritualism is about as flimsy as Father Flanagan's. The argument used is about this: "What takes place under the auspices of the Catholic Church is of God \* \* \* but what occurs outside the domain of that church is Satanic."

Father Gmiener believes in a Spirit world; so does the Spiritualist. Father Gmiener believes both good and bad spirits return—that the souls of the dead may administer to the living; so does the Spiritualist. If I were to use Father Flanagan's own courteous phraseology I would say: "The lesson which I wish to inject into your head is this;" It is a very strange thing that a Catholic priest who believes as much in the ministration of the so-called dead, as the average priest does, should make the ludicrous



attempt to discredit similar phenomena among Spiritualists, simply because they occur outside the pale of Catholicism.

That the "communion of saints," or the appearance of departed souls is a common belief in the Catholic Church, even Father Flanagan will not deny. Father Flanagan quotes the intention of Father Gmiener, in writing his book, "Spirits of Darkness." He fails to quote a belief that appears on the very first page of that book, viz: "But what is to us, as Christians, of still greater importance, is that also both the Bible and the church teach in unmistakable terms, that such a spirit world really exists, and that the spirits, both good and bad, continually take a lively interest in the affairs of mankind."

On page 55 of the same book, Father Gmiener remarks: "Of course not all phenomena caused by spirits, and witnessed on earth, are to be ascribed to the agency of evil spirits. Many such phenomena, of which we, for instance, often read in the Bible or in the lives of



the saints, are undoubtedly due to the agency of good spirits, holy angels, or to God himself." Father Gmiener's language sounds like a line from the lecture of a Spiritualist.

With the supreme egotism for which they are noted men like Father Flanagan assert—if a phenomenon occurs in the presence of a Catholic, God has sent a special dispensation to bless him; but if a similar phenomenon occurs to any other, then, forsooth, it's the Devil, say these authoritarians. If a dead Catholic comes back—even though it is to beg for prayers of intercession for the relief of his tortured soul, it is an act of Providence in the eyes of Father Flanagan. But if a departed Spiritualist mother returns to her son, he would cry, "evil spirits."

After accusing me of trying to hide behind "rubbish" Father Flanagan proceeds to set up a man of straw, and valiantly demolishes it with the flourish of his "profound regard for the wisdom of Solomon." He refers to a portion of a statement of mine—his reporters only

getting a small portion of what I said. It was this:

After relating an experience that I had had with a gentleman of the cloth, who declared that God was opposed to Spiritualism, because the Bible nowhere mentioned the subject I said: "We can use that argument the other way, and say that we challenge every church denomination to show where Jesus or God said go out and be a Catholic, a Methodist, a Baptist, a Spiritualist, etc." Thus Father Flanagan, the only difficulty with the lesson you "wish to inject into my head," is you are too late on the scene.

Wrestling with his man of straw Father Flanagan, proudly exclaims: "if the Bible is silent about a certain matter it does not follow that it is forbidden." And he thinks he has made a mighty stroke with the declaration, but, gentle sir, you are late, I called attention to that fact in my lecture, and all of my hearers who had any power of comprehension at all are aware of the fact.

Rev. Flanagan graciously admits that: "the Bible does not say, in as many words be a Catholic," "but," he adds, "it teaches the foundation and authority of the 'Catholic Church.'" And he quotes, as his authority, the statement of a man whom the members of his own clergy admit did not write until some years after the transition of Jesus. This he construes to mean the "Catholic Church." It is to be hoped, for the sake of that authority, that the reporters who put the foregoing words in the mouth of Jesus had better memories than those who reported my lecture to my good friend.

The reverend father makes much of the silence of the Bible, and remarks—with great gentleness and courtesy—"the lesson I wish to inject into your head is this: if the Bible is silent about a certain matter it does not follow that it is forbidden." Thanks, father, I have the lesson "injected" into my head. Had you been at the hall the night I lectured you would have known that

was precisely the position I took. I am glad it has your endorsement.

Now, my generous opponent objects to the reference to the article on "Mother Love," and says it: "is the reply of a disputant who has a weak cause to defend." However "weak" that cause may be it is giving Father Flanagan, and many others of the Catholic clergy, no little uneasiness. Did they not recognize its strength they would not fight it as they do. The Pope would not have sanctioned the work of Dr. Godfrey Raupert in his lectures against Spiritualism.

Father Flanagan says: "it is one thing to believe that spirits may appear if God permits them, and something else to hold that our departed friends are the authors of all the foolish and silly nonsense of the seance room." How very profound! (?) From this we are safe in assuming, I suppose, that Father Flanagan has spent much time in the "seance room," and knows, by actual experience, whereof he speaks. I would be perfectly willing



to have the thought which emanated from "seance rooms" in which I have been put beside some of the "illuminated" teaching of some of Father Flanagan's predecessors.

Now we have the reverend father waxing great in authority. He tells us: "it would be unworthy of God, who has seen fit to deprive us of the knowledge of many things which Spiritism is said to reveal, to put the souls of our departed friends at the disposal of the mediums to satisfy the curiosity of the sitters." No Spiritualist that I have ever known contends that the medium has dominion over departed spirits; it is a fact, as I emphatically stated that they must come voluntarily, or else there will be no communication.

He thinks it is "unworthy" of God that he allows these manifestations to occur among Spiritualists; but when a portion of the finger of a dead Catholic is pressed by the lips of the living, it is quite worthy of God, to permit strange manifestations and divers so-called mir-



acles to occur. All the things told of Anthony of Padua; of Winefride, and many of others are quite worthy of God, because the Church tells the story.

My friend talks about "calling up the dead;" yet no Spiritualist believes in such a thing. Father Flanagan might have to call his friends "up" but ours do not come that way. And the Spiritualist is emphatic in the belief that everything occurs in harmony with infinite law. The medium has no power to compel the presence of the departed. I am sure God must be greatly gratified to have a Father Flanagan to inform him when His conduct is "unworthy."

I have already intimated the unreliability of Father Flanagan's information concerning my lecture. The following quotation is self-evidently unreliable; his reporter quotes me as follows: "I know a priest in Minneapolis or Milwaukee, who when a woman went to tell him she believed in Spiritualism and knew she could not be a Catholic and a Spiritualist at the same time said to her: 'Sister,

go right on, by their fruits you shall know them.'”

Not only is the phraseology wrong in its sense—it is worse. It must be a strange kind of a reporter who could not tell the next day after a lecture whether a man said Minneapolis or Milwaukee. Yet this is the situation with Father Flanagan’s reporter. I did say I knew “of a priest” who is said to have made a similar remark. The lady in question, who told me this experience, said she went to a priest in the church of which she was a communicant, and told him of her spiritual experiences, and of the comfort she had given others, after which she was told to “go right on as she was doing a good work.”

Father Flanagan wants the name of the priest. If the lady will give the permission to have her name, and that of her confessor, told, he shall have it. Otherwise, even at the risk of incurring his displeasure it will have to be withheld, naturally.

In conclusion let me say that, with

your permission, Mr. Editor, I shall examine Father Flanagan's last letter, dated June 15, in my next communication, which I hope to get to you in time for the next issue of the *Echo*.

WILL J. ERWOOD.

Wheeling, W. Va., *June 23, 1911.*

## Father Flanagan's Reply

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO."

DEAR SIR:

In your issue of the 27th inst., Rev. Erwood after a long silence speaks again in defense of "Spiritualism."

I waited till his third letter appeared before replying to the communication above mentioned.

The spiritist thinks I construed his delay to mean that he was disheartened. Not so, good sir. During the twelve or fourteen days it took you to prepare your "reply," if I did think of you at all, it was only to view you with a benevolence which hardly rises to the dignity of contempt. Your tactics, from the beginning, have been to give the most prominence and space to petty matters, while you dodge the important points. Any child of the primary grades of our city schools, who read your letters,

could easily see the hollowness of your position.

Mr. Erwood says the Spiritists did not start the present controversy. He devotes three paragraphs of his letter to this phase of the subject, and says nothing. He asserts that I was not singled out for attack. Yet my name was expressly mentioned. I was requested to attend the meeting and ask questions. This looks as though I was singled out.

Referring to the announcement, anent answering my questions in the school hall, Rev. Erwood remarks:

“Will Father Flanagan produce that subsequent issue—I would like to see my promise. Yes, indeed, Father Flanagan is a fair controversialist. I made no such promise.”

I hereby produce the article in question to gratify Rev. Erwood. It appeared in the *Echo* of June 8, 1911. It is as follows:

“*Fair Crowds Heard Spiritualist Lecture; Another This Evening.*

“A fair-sized audience heard the Spirit-



ualist lecture by Rev. Erwood at the Central school hall last evening.

“This evening tickets will not be required, but a silver offering will be taken. Those already having tickets will not be expected to contribute to the offering.

“This evening, Rev. Erwood will answer the questions recently propounded thru the *Echo* by Rev. Father Flanagan.”

Now, Mr. Erwood, I have given you the article in its entirety. I have the paper in which it appeared. I did not “quote from memory.” The copy of the *Echo* I speak of is on file at the *Echo* office.

Does not the announcement in the *Echo*, Mr. Editor, confirm my statement that Rev. Erwood promised to answer my questions, in the school hall on Thursday evening, June 8? When a man rushes into print and says he will do something, have people not a right to expect that he will keep his word? Is Rev. Erwood reduced to the necessity of lying to get out of the difficulty? He

was advertised to answer my questions. He did not do so. He deceived the people. Many went the second night of Mr. Erwood's lectures to hear what he had to say in answer to the questions. They were so disappointed with the first evening's output that the promised answering of the questions alone attracted them.

It is true, when I proposed the questions, I requested that they be answered through the columns of the *Echo*. I made this request because the challenge appeared in the *Echo*. But, when the paper announced that Rev. Erwood would answer the questions, I said that the people who went to hear him had a right to expect that he would do as he said. Mr. Erwood now says he made no promise to answer the questions in the school hall. This ruse will not do. Why did you Spiritists advertise to do something you did not intend to do?

My Spiritistic antagonist whoops of victory because I did not attend his lectures. He says:

“I am told that Father Flanagan said he would be there Thursday night, that he was a man of his word and would be present.”

Who gave you this information, Rev. Erwood? I did not say I would attend your lectures. I had not time to spare to attend the farce, which you and the medium, who gave the “spirit messages,” paraded before the public as communications from beyond the grave, neither could you reasonably expect that I would lose time listening to the groans of your medium, or your own silly twaddle which you called a lecture.

Again, you cannot deny, that much of your Spiritistic rappings, whisperings, mysterious writings, etc., have been shown to be the result of deliberate fraud on the part of professional mediums. If this has been the case with some of your greatest mediums we can well judge of what your obscure diviner had to offer.

Speaking of Father Gmeiner’s book, and the gentleman who asked to examine

it my unscrupulous opponent has this to say:

“After the lecture a member of Father Flanagan’s church asked to see the book, which I immediately handed him in the presence of a dozen persons. When he read the title page and saw that it was printed by ‘Hoffman Bros., Printers to The Holy Apostolic See,’ he was much perturbed, and declared he did not believe the book to have been published with the sanction of a priest and doubted that Hoffman Bros. were official printers, etc.

“The sight of the book must have disturbed his memory greatly, for despite the fact that he saw the book, read its title page, etc., and conferred with the young lady who had attempted to take notes, he was unable to inform Father Flanagan as to the name of the book; on the following—Friday—morning the young lady telephoned me and asked the name of the volume, which I gave her, also telling her the name of publishers and city in which book was published.



Had I been trying to conceal all of this that was my chance.'''

Of course the gentleman was surprised when he saw the book Rev. Erwood quoted from. He never remembered hearing of such Catholic doctrines as you tried to make Father Gmeiner teach. Any Catholic who heard your quotations, wrenched from the context and garbled to suit your foul purpose, would have been surprised.

So you, Rev. Erwood, cheerfully gave the young lady the title of the book and lost a good chance to conceal all if you so wished. How courageous you are! What an honest man the Baltimore Spiritist must be! Rev. Erwood when caught and cornered was forced to give the name of the book from which he took his garbled quotations. He was caught as a rat in a trap, there was no escape for him, so he admits the truth, when he cannot do otherwise. Had you been fair and just Mr. Erwood, you would have given the name of the book from which you quoted together with



the page, and this during your lecture, when you made use of your quotations. If you were a fair controversialist you would not have lied to the gentleman who asked for the book, by telling him the work was out of print and he could not get it. Did I say too much, Mr. Editor, when I denominated Rev. Erwood as an unfair controversialist?

My exposure of the fallacy of Spiritism has evidently disturbed my friend's equanimity. He comes forward to defend his teachings. His words are:

"That the communion of saints, or the appearance of departed souls is a common belief in the Catholic Church, even Father Flanagan will not deny. Father Flanagan quotes the intention of Father Gmiener, in writing his book, 'Spirits of Darkness.' He fails to quote a belief that appears on the very first page of that book, viz: "But what is it to us, as Christians of still greater importance, is that both the Bible and the church teach in unmistakable terms, that such a spirit world really exists, and

that the spirits both good and bad, continually take a lively interest in the affairs of mankind.”

“On page 55 of the same book, Father Gmiener remarks: ‘Of course not all phenomena caused by spirits, and witnessed on earth, are to be ascribed to the agency of evil spirits. Many such phenomena, of which we, for instance, often read in the Bible or in the lives of the saints, are undoubtedly due to the agency of good spirits, holy angels or in God Himself.’ Father Gmiener’s language sounds like a line from the lecture of a Spiritualist.”

This is another sample of the Spiritistic minister’s “ways that are dark and tricks that are vain.” He would fain have men believe that the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints, is about the same as his silly notions of the appearance of departed spirits.

Rev. Erwood, you should study the penny catechism of Catholic doctrine, before you undertake to explain the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The communion of saints is the communication of spiritual blessings among the members of the church. It is not what you say it is.

There is no sense in your quotation from Father Gmeiner's book. The words are truly the words of Father Gmeiner, but they prove nothing in favor of your position. I never denied that both the church and the Bible teach the existence of a spirit world. I do not ascribe all the phenomena caused by spirits to the agency of evil spirits. This is not the question. It rests with you, Rev. Erwood, to prove that the spirits masquerading as the souls of departed friends are the intelligence they say they are.

Our exponent of Spiritism, mindful of my Biblical quotations, in a spirit of gratitude thanks me, and assures me that he had certain lessons injected into his head. If so he has forgotten them.

Turning to another portion of Mr. Erwood's letter I find that he says that Spiritualism is giving the Catholic clergy no little uneasiness. Indeed Mr. Erwood

is it so? The old mother church is not afraid of "Modern Spiritualism." She was built by the Divine Architect on the everlasting rock, and the forces issuing forth from the "gates of hell" in the guise of "Modern Spiritualism" cannot harm her. She does not lower her flag for even the *spirits of darkness*, nor does she fear their ready willing dupes the "*Spiritualists*." In the years to come, "Modern Spiritualism" will be only recollected in name, like any of the other varieties of wickedness or folly, then the future ecclesiastical historian will write the thrilling record, namely, that of all the phases of irreligion, "Modern Spiritualism," was the greatest humbug of any age.

The Catholic Church, bear in mind my misguided Spiritist, saw the rise and fall of enemies more powerful than "Modern Spiritism." She will last till the end of time, and ever carry on her warfare against Satan, even though he be transformed into "the angel of light," you Spiritists make of him.



After telling Catholics that they should be uneasy about the great advance of Spiritism the Rev. Medium gives way again to his furious antics and frenzied shrieks, because I said it would be unworthy of God to put the souls of the departed at the disposal of the mediums of his cult. Horribly stuffed with the epithets of war, he buckles on his armor, mounts his steed, and rides full-tilt against "a portion of the finger of a dead Catholic;" only to discover that the saints are the friends of God, and their bones are worthy of respect.

The next move of our Spiritistic champion is to object to my reporter's account of his lecture. There is one portion of it, however, the substance of which he admits. I am surprised that he admits anything. He does not deny having said, that he knew a lady, who told him that a priest advised her to continue to be a Spiritist. I asked Rev. Erwood to give me the name of the priest he told of. He has not done so. To get out of the difficulty he shifts about. He says:



“If the lady will give permission, to have her name, and that of her confessor, told, he shall have it. Otherwise even at the risk of incurring his displeasure, it will have to be withheld, naturally.”

Now, Rev. Erwood, this is another of your tricks. People are not gullible enough to believe what you say. No Catholic priest, in good standing, ever approved of Spiritism in the sense in which you teach it. I do not believe what you say. I have found you so utterly unreliable in your explanations, etc., that until you give me the desired information I must look upon your statement as foully false and detestably calumnious.

If the case you speak of was such a secret why did you make use of it on a public platform?

In my next letter, Mr. Editor, I shall consider Rev. Erwood's letter of Thursday evening.

F. J. FLANAGAN.

Moundsville, W. Va.,  
*Friday, June 30, 1911.*



# Rev. Erwood Writes Again on the Spiritualism Controversy

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EDITOR MOUNDSVILLE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

"Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." Our good friend, Father Flanagan, has become so excited that in his last letter he again forgets to confine himself strictly to facts in the case. Continuing to reveal his unreliable information concerning my lecture in Moundsville he again accuses me of "inviting him" to discuss "Spiritism;" but this time he adds: "the reverend pastor of one of the Methodist churches."

In his previous letter he said that I had "advertised" to answer his questions in the hall—that I had "promised" so to do, etc. Yet the facts are that I neither advertised, nor caused to be advertised, any such statement. I would not have done so after reading his questions, *unless I was sure that Father*

*Flanagan would be present.* They told me that he would be there because he had said so; I felt certain that Rev. Flanagan would not be present, and so expressed myself. Consequently I “promised” to reply through the columns of the *Echo*.

Father Flanagan exclaims—after taking a fling at my views of religious controversy—“Why did you provoke this controversy by your challenge?” I presume he thinks we should remain meekly submissive whenever a Catholic priest or other clergymen see fit to attack Spiritualism. He accuses me of making “a cowardly attack on the Catholic Church,” and waxes exceedingly indignant. Yet his “lecture” on “Spiritism” was not a cowardly attack. Now he seeks to bring the Methodist clergyman into the discussion, knowing full well that his theology regards Methodism as quite as unscriptural as it does Spiritualism.

Father Flanagan no doubt thought that he had the field clear, and might attack Spiritualism to his heart’s content, and there would be no response—but

that day is passed, my dear friend. We are quite familiar with the arrogance of the "Father Flanagan's" in every age; we know something of their attacks on the different religious movements of the world. And the present Father Flanagan is not the first one who has attempted to show that the devil was back of innovations in progress. As they have unsuccessfully battled against the Brunos, the Gallileos and the Copernicus of all ages, so they will unsuccessfully battle against Spiritualism.

He glibly prates about exposing "devil worship," as he characterizes Spiritualism. We have heard that story before. And insinuates that Spiritualism is destructive to health, morals and Christ-like conduct. But I am quite certain the character and morals of the average Spiritualist will compare quite favorably with that of members of Father Flanagan's own denomination. As for health and sanity they will stand the test quite well, I think.

And Father Flanagan says: "\* \* \* did you not depart from the 'avocation and



dignity' of a real minister when you dishonestly tried to make Father Gmiener teach doctrines which the very title of his book gives the lie to." Am I to infer that the title of the book gave the "lie" to what I read? Very good! We shall see!

My position in my lecture was this: It is singular that a church which has so much lore concerning the dead and their interest in the living, should be so eager to destroy the very thing that would corroborate the possibility of some of the phenomena which are so profusely recorded in its own literature. And I stated that the Catholic Church taught that the so-called dead could and did return. This statement I reiterate here. In support of the contention I read from Father Gmiener's book, quotations from which appear in yesterday's letter. Father Flanagan will not deny this belief in the Catholic Church. He cannot. But he will seek to evade the issue by telling us: "that is different—that is in the Catholic Church by God's

permission.” Does he know of anything that is not “by God’s permission?”

Father Gmiener, on page 6, of “Spirits of Darkness,” says: “The belief, then, in the existence and manifestations of spirits on earth, is to be met with not only among ancient and heathen nations, but it is firmly held also by the Bible and the church, in which countless millions of the most civilized and intelligent people nowadays believe.”

He also says, on page 1: “\* \* \* both the Bible and the church teach in unmistakable terms, that such a spirit-world really exists, and that the spirits, both good and bad, continually take a lively interest in the affairs of mankind.”

The Spiritualist is emphatic in the same belief. Father Flanagan would get around that by the declaration that the *good* spirits were Catholics, and the *bad* spirits, Spiritualists. Yet his theology teaches that those who linger in purgatory may come back, as well as those who have gone higher. And the man in purgatory is not as good as he might be,

hence, it may be that even Catholics are visited by undesirables. Indeed Father Gmiener so teaches. Of that later.

Then Father Gmiener, after discussing the manner in which some "so-called scientists" sought to explain away spirit phenomena, makes this very significant statement: (page 14)

"We see this is a matter of vital importance to Christianity nowadays, and deserves our earnest attention. If *all* alleged spirit-manifestations were only products of delusion or deception, as some modern scientists quite confidently insinuate or declare—then the Christian religion would be mistaken in one of its very fundamental doctrines."

According to this writer "spirit-communication" is one of the "fundamental" doctrines of "Christianity." And Father Gmiener quotes St. Thomas in support of his contentions, working strenuously to prove that there are such things as spirit phenomena which may be ascribed to either good or bad spirits. In this he is simply stating a fact frankly

admitted by all Spiritualists who have made a study of the matter.

Father Gmiener even quotes from "Pagan and Heathen" experiences to strengthen his case, and winds up by a declaration that "Spiritualism" is the work of demons, devils, etc. He has an array of "ghost stories and demoniacal obsessions" occurring during the pastorate of various priests, that would do credit to the Fairy Tales of Hans Anderson. And interspersed throughout the book we find such assuring passages as this: (page 55)

"Of course, not all phenomena caused by spirits and witnessed on earth, are to be ascribed to the agency of evil spirits. Many such phenomena, of which we, for instance, often read in the Bible or in the lives of the saints, are undoubtedly due to the agency of good spirits or holy angels, or God Himself."

He assures us that: "some spirit-phenomena may be of doubtful character as to their origin; it may be difficult, under the circumstances, to decide whether they are to be ascribed to



good or evil spirits.” And again: “some spirit phenomena are undoubtedly to be ascribed to the agency of evil spirits; according to the rule; ‘by their fruits you shall know them.’” (Page 55.)

Had Father Gmiener deliberately sought to state the position of the Spiritualist on these matters he could not have done so more clearly than in the above quotations. We believe in *testing* the spirit—in trying them when they seek to manifest.

For reading the above, and many other passages, during my lecture Father Flanagan accuses me of trying to make “Father Gmiener teach doctrines which the very title of his book gives the lie to.” And he wails: “cowardly attack on the Catholic Church.” Father Flanagan’s attack on “Spiritualism” was heroic—a brave, manly event. (?) My brief references to his own literature is, in his estimation, “cowardly.” Do the above references misrepresent Catholic doctrines? If they do I am not the one who is guilty of misrepresentation.



When Father Flanagan lacked the courage to attend the meeting held there in Moundsville, and depended entirely upon hear-say evidence for his knowledge thereof, it ill becomes him to talk of "baseness and misrepresentation."

And my reverend friend talks about "wandering." The only thing necessary in this connection is to ask the readers to take my letter in the issue of June 13, and Father Flanagan's letter in issue of June 16. They will then see who it is that has *wandered*." After quoting us a passage from Milton's "Paradise Lost" relative to "fraud and guile" he declares: "This is exactly what Mr. Erwood has done."

Continuing, he says: "He has resorted to fraud and guile. Instead of clear answers to my questions he tells of changes in psychological studies and retires behind a patent medicine advertisement." You are mistaken, Reverend Sir, I have not retired—nor am I likely to so long as you continue as you have, and this generous Editor will give me space in which to reply.

That "patent medicine advertisement" hurts Father Flanagan, because it and its endorsements are quite sufficient to prove that Catholic clergymen suffer from the maladies which he tried to make the people believe were special possessions of Spiritualists. Father Flanagan is the man "of guile." He tried to make it appear that the majority of the most noted Spiritualists became insane, neurotics and suicides. He knows better, if he knows anything about the subject at all.

He has tried to make it appear that all the phenomena of Spiritualism were of demoniac agency—using the term as he uses it. Father Flanagan's knowledge of the subject is too limited to justify him in such a declaration. He has tried to give the impression that Spiritualism is devil worship; yet did he know of Spiritualists as much as he claims, he would know how untrue that is. Because a man believes he can communicate with a departed friend outside of the Catholic Church, he is a "devil worshipper."

Talk about "sophistry and quibbling," my gentle, "fair minded controversialist" is a very prince of quibblers and sophists. When he attempts to answer what I said about the "dual meaning of demon," he says: "a demon is an evil spirit."

He does not deny, however, that it has been defined for centuries exactly as I said, viz: "the spirit of a dead man, either good or bad." He knows it has been used by scholars, lexicographers and classical writers in that dual sense. Yet with his wily sophistry he would impress his readers with the belief that it is evil. He is with this as with his attempt to make it appear that we attacked him. But so long as the report of his lecture on Spiritualism stands in the Catholic and secular press he will be unable to make good his contention, however much he tries.

Now, Rev. Flanagan talks to me about "isolated" passages, etc. Yet in answer to my statement that "sincerity, earnestness \* \* \* purity of thought, etc.," was a safeguard against "evil spirits,"

he flaunts a statement found in Hudson Tuttle's "Arcana of Spiritualism" in which Mr. Tuttle tells of an experience in which he felt an uncontrollable desire to kill; also of a desire to commit suicide when he heard the rush of the water. And my good friend remarks; "I am sure Mr. Erwood will not accuse Hudson Turtle \* \* \* of want of honesty, sincerity and earnestness during his seances."

Certainly not! The very fact that Hudson Tuttle related that experience in a book that was written in the interest of Spiritualism proves the man sincere and honest. Father Flanagan, however, refrains from telling us that this was one of the earliest experiences of Hudson Tuttle. He refrains from mentioning the cautions given by Hudson Tuttle, nor does he relate the fact that Mr. Tuttle did not commit suicide, nor kill. He failed to relate that Mr. Tuttle is author of numerous books, in some of which there are bits of ethical instruction that even Father Flanagan might imbibe to his manifest profit.



No, no! Father Flanagan would not take advantage of an isolated passage. Oh, no! He is too fair. (?) But, is such a statement as the one quoted from Hudson Tuttle an argument against a system of thought? Is the fact that a man is tempted to make away with himself, or destroy another, or make any other mistake an argument against a religious movement? If it is, then indeed would Father Flanagan be left more dangerously situated than he now imagines. Listen:

“Yet no mortal is perfectly secure from the temptations of Satan. The better the Christian, the greater the saint, the more he may expect that the evil spirits hate and molest him, as far as Providence may permit. The pious author of the ‘Following of Christ,’ book IV, chapter 18, 3, observes: ‘The devil tempts not unbelievers and sinners, whom he surely possesses, but the devout faithful, he many ways tempts and molests.’ This explains why we read so much of temptations and diabolic persecutions in



the lives of the saints or pious Christian.” “Spirits of Darkness,” by Rev. John Gmiener, page 49.

Father Gmiener tells us that: “these spirits can go no further than God’s Providence permits them.” Thus whatever is done by good, bad or indifferent spirits, is in the last, in accord with the Providence of God. In this Father Flanagan will see that his argument is rather a dangerous thing for his own philosophy. Why did not Father Flanagan frankly tell his readers that there are none who are so earnestly zealous of pointing out the dangers in the flagrant abuse of psychic power as Spiritualists. We frankly admit the dangers, and are seeking to instruct the reading public on that score.

Rev. Flanagan again misquotes me, when he says: “my friend objects to my statements anent the dangers of Spiritism and the evil effects of it.” This is untrue, as Father Flanagan must know if he read my letter. His wrath must have gotten the better of his

judgment or he would not have made that statement. Good friends, read my letter in the issue of June 13. You will find there the following words:

“Yes, we admit that there is danger in the indiscriminate, thoughtless and reckless accentuation of man’s psychic powers.” Then follows a reasonable explanation of the reason. Read again, Father.

Now here is what I object to: I object to Father Flanagan’s arrogant assertion that the tendency of Spiritualism is toward “insanity, nervous disorders and suicide.” I object to his arrogation to himself of the right of judgment over the millions of Spiritualists, who number among them as fine characters, mentally, morally, physically and spiritually, as are to be found in any church all the way down the line to the Catholic Church. I object to the insinuation, contained in your words, of degeneracy; this you imply when you accuse us of devil worship and the like.

Rev. Flanagan quotes Dr. Godfrey

Raupert's book: "The Dangers of Spiritualism," as another one of his evidences against Spiritualism; and he tells us that Dr. Raupert was himself a Spiritualist. Unless I am greatly mistaken Dr. Raupert lectured in this country not very long ago against Spiritualism, under the auspices of various Catholic Institutions, and with the direct sanction of the present Pope. That's the kind of Spiritualist Dr. Raupert is. He quotes, or rather "refers" me to the works of Henry M. Huguin and Dr. B. F. Hatch. If these are the best works he can quote or refer to, he is indeed in a bad way.

Why does he not refer us to Dr. I. K. Funk's works; Dr. Funk does not claim to be a Spiritualist, but has given a fair and impartial statement of his experiences. He might have referred us to the works of Camille Flammarion, of Sir Wm. Crookes, Alfred Russell Wallace, Prof. Richet, Sir Oliver Lodge, Frederick W. H. Meyers and many others, not excepting the works of Prof. James Hyslop.

Father Flanagan is passing over my

statement that my own experience did not prove that "spirits" perpetrate "silly tricks;" and that experience covers a period of many years. But even suppose they have thus done, it does not signify that it is an argument against Spiritualism. At most it would evidence, as I have already intimated, one of the accidents that occur in the path of human development. And they are not the rule by any means as he would have us infer.

My reverend friend still harps upon what he calls the "hopeless differences" in the descriptions of the other world. He is evading my answer entirely; I said very plainly that "different stages of development, different temperaments and individuality, must be taken into consideration. On the essentials they are agreed, are the intelligent communicants, from the spirit world. They are emphatic in asserting there is no deviation from law—that each man must pay the full price of his conduct; that life in the other world is graded by the mental,



moral and spiritual status of the individuals entering therein. Being humans, as we are, they differ on many of the non-essentials; some of them do.

We know when we are getting the right view when we receive that which is in harmony with every well defined law of life. We believe in natural law in the spiritual world.

It is strange that Father Flanagan, with the disputes and differences of opinion, which still echo in the corridors of the history of the Catholic Church, would argue that a few differences of opinion, in description, invalidate the fundamentals of any religious system. There had not been a religion left standing in the world not accepting his own, if that were true. We sift, weigh, analyze and test what we receive, and base our judgment upon the result.

Father Flanagan objects to my statement, that much of the difficulty in communicating and establishing identity is due to the fact that we are yet in process of development. And he gives



the impression that I said I did not claim perfection for the spirits. And yet he talks about quibbling. Any sane reader of my former letter will observe that I said:

“\* \* \* according to the development of the media shall the communications be clear and lucid, or otherwise;” and, “\* \* \* Difficulty in establishing identity is not a proof of the degeneration of the soul manifesting—it is evidence of the imperfection of the means of communication, due at times to undue haste, to unnecessary eagerness and lack of development.”

And Father Flanagan tells me “You are wrong, Rev. Erwood. The reliable and cautious scientists \* \* \* have not committed themselves further than to declare that these phenomena must be attributed to intelligent agents. They do not assert, as you try to say they do, that they believe in the identity of the communicating spirit.”

It is strange that Father Flanagan would say that, after telling us in his

own lecture, that: "the only theory that covers all of the phenomena and is of any value to meet all the conditions of the problem was the spiritistic theory, and this is the *one that is being increasingly adopted by science.*" Here, again, Father Flanagan has coincided with our view.

Now, my dear Father Flanagan, I do not "try to say" that many of the scientists accept the spiritualistic theory, but I say it flatly and unreservedly. Not all of them, yet, remember, but many. And, as you have said, they are "increasingly" adopting it. Space forbids many quotations, hence few must suffice for the present.

Alfred Russel Wallace, scientist of world replete, says: "It, psychical research, further demonstrates, by direct evidence as conclusive as the nature of the case admits, that the so-called dead are alive—that our friends are often with us, though unseen, and can give direct proof of a future life which so many crave, but for want of which so many live and die in anxious doubt."

Sir Oliver Lodge has said: "If anyone cares to know what sort of conviction has been in upon my mind as a scientist by some twenty years' familiarity with psychical research, I am for all personal purposes, convinced of the persistence of human existence beyond bodily death; and though I am not able to justify that belief in a full and complete manner, yet it is a belief which has been produced by scientific evidence."

I have quoted these men because they are *cautious*, and I might, Mr. Editor, *fill your paper* with the statements of the scientific men who, as Father Flanagan says, are "increasingly" adopting the spiritistic theory. Now let me say to our friend we are sure that our "dear dead friends" are present when they have proved their identity.

Now, Father Flanagan quotes from M. Stainton Moses, to prove that "Spiritism" is manifestly antagonistic to the teaching of Scripture, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. I believe more divinity than Father Flanagan does.

But, for his quotation, which follows, what of that? He quotes:

“We would have you know that the spiritual idea of Jesus, the Christ, is no more like the human notion, with its accessories of atonement and redemption, as men have grasped them, than was the calf, ignorantly carved by the ancient Hebrews, like to God who strove to reveal Himself to them.”

Father Flanagan would have us believe this antagonistic, because he does not realize the distinction between “the spiritual idea” and the human. Spiritualism teaches that mankind is saved by Christ in the same degree as they imbibe the Christ principle and become Christ-like. They teach emphatically the spiritual aspect of the subject.

Father Flanagan cannot close his letter without another fling in order to make folks believe we attacked him, and in reference to my mention of the Golden Rule, says: “Why did you not observe this rule; why did you through your agent challenge me to discuss Spiritism?”



As a matter of fact I have been very careful thus to do. In the first place I knew nothing of the invitation extended to Father Flanagan to be present at our meeting until I landed in Moundsville; nor did I know he had lectured against Spiritualism in that city.

But since Father Flanagan did give that lecture I commend my friend in Moundsville for inviting him and all others to attend the meeting. It was the only thing for him to do. And had my reverend brother been present he would have been better posted as to my position.

Father Flanagan is very generous when he says: "if you Spiritists are satisfied to be duped by lying spirits who masquerade as the souls of the dead, I have no quarrel with you on that score." He has yet to prove that they are "lying spirits" masquerading as our departed friends. And if he has no "quarrel" on that score he takes a strange way to prove it.

I am glad he respects my "conscience;" and it was nice of him to add: "if you



have one." Perhaps mine would not suffer by comparison with his own. I assure him we do not question his right to "defend himself;" by no means, but the dear man must remember he is not alone in that right.

I am truly grateful to Father Flanagan for thus making it possible for me to lay some plain truths before the people; it will do us no end of good to have the people take my letters and compare them with his own—it will make many people think, and when they begin to think they investigate Spiritualism; and when they investigate they espouse its theories. I am not sure but that is the very thing Father Flanagan fears. And as quickly as any further letters he may see fit to write can reach me I will give them their just due.

Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for your generous courtesy, I am,

Very truly yours,

WILL J. ERWOOD.

Wheeling, W. Va. *June 26, 1911.*

## Letters on Spiritism



The *Echo* believes that its readers have had opportunity to form conclusions one way or another on the matter of Spiritism or Spiritualism from the series of articles published during the past several weeks, and, further, local events are on the calendar in the near future that will doubtless require all our typesetting facilities, therefore we deem it fair all around to close the series after Rev. Father Flanagan replies to the two articles by Rev. Erwood, which are now here and will be published as soon as they are put in type.



## Reply of Rev. Erwood

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EDITOR MOUNDSVILLE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

Father Flanagan's latest effusions are before me, one having reached on the night of the 4th, the other on the 5th. I make this brief explanation in deference to my worthy opponent's gentle and benevolent spirit; I note that Father Flanagan refuses to accept my delay in answering his former letters, to absence from the city, and assures the readers of the *Echo* that it required twelve to fourteen days to prepare an answer to his *overwhelming* (?) arguments. Of course there is no *conceit* in my reverend brother.

And if he thought of me at all during that time it was only to view me "with a benevolence which hardly rises to the dignity of contempt." Very tender and gentle of him; but I had no idea that his benevolence was strong enough to rise even that high. And I am glad he con-

soles himself with the thought that even a "schoolboy" could easily see through the "hollowness" of my position, as he puts it. It is necessary for him to have some consolation, and as it takes but little to supply it; he might as well grasp at that straw as any other.

Father Flanagan continues to ignore the fact of his own lecture as a beginning of the present controversy, and still carps about being singled out, etc. And he makes much of the announcement which appeared in the issue of the *Echo* for June 8, which he reproduces, and which I presume is correct, though I have not seen the paper. Referring to the statement that "Rev. Erwood will answer the questions recently propounded by Rev. Father Flanagan," I have only this to say: I was not aware of such a notice being inserted in the paper. Any one with a grain of sense would know that had I been aware of such an announcement I would not have been foolish enough to deny it, nor to request him to produce the article in which such



announcement was made. I would have conceded the fact that, even tho I knew nothing of the notice being printed, the public would have been justified in expecting more attention to the questions than I gave them in the meeting.

Father Flanagan makes so much of this lone point that he tries by personal abuse to divert attention from the quotations I made in my letter, and he comes forth with this: "If you were a fair controversialist you would not have lied to the gentleman who asked for the book, by telling him the book was out of print, and that he could not get it."

The only trouble with this point is that it is untrue: *I did not say the book was out of print* I said *I thought it was*. Why? Because I was three years getting a copy of the book. I went to book store after book store, both Catholic and otherwise, asking for it, and finally found a second hand copy. Invariably I was told: "We cannot get it—it is out of print." And this is not an unusual occurrence; only within a week I have

secured a book after a search of five years. If asked about this, too, I would say: "out of print," for thus it has been reported to me.

My reverend friend prates about exposing the "fallacy of Spiritism," and with a wave of his pen thinks he has disposed of the subject. But Father Flanagan has only "exposed" his own prejudice against the subject, and his eagerness to divert the attention of his flock, from this fascinatingly interesting subject. That is all he has exposed.

In trying to dispose of my quotations from Father Gmeiner's book, he says: "Rev. Erwood you should study the penny catechism of the Catholic doctrine before you undertake to explain the teachings of the Catholic Church."

My good friend does not know to whom he makes this remark. *The first book that I ever learned to read was a Catholic catechism.* The Bible history was a companion, and I have been familiar with Catholic practice all of my life, for nearly every member of my

family, on the maternal side, are members of the Catholic Church. I have listened to Father Conway expound the philosophy of that church. I have his "Question Box," and the works of many other eminent priests of the Catholic Church. I am not unfamiliar with the Catholic doctrine.

Father Flanagan says: "He would fain have men believe that the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints, is about the same as his silly notions of the appearance of departed spirits." And this is the way Father Flanagan tries to dispose of my quotations from Father Gmeiner's book. He says: "There is no sense in your quotations from Father Gmeiner's book. The words are truly the words of Father Gmeiner, but they prove nothing in favor of your position."

Do they not? Is there not any sense in the quotations? It would well behoove the Catholic Church to suppress Father Gmeiner's book if there "is no sense" in the quotations I have made. I merely ask our readers to turn to my former

letter and read again the quotations made. Let them decide as to their value. They do not uphold my position, says Father Flanagan, Indeed! What is my position? Briefly it is this:

Death makes no break in the continuity of individuality. The soul or spirit is actively conscious after death. There is no barrier to inter-communication between the so-called dead and the living. The good and the bad, alike, may, under certain circumstances appear to the living and converse with them. They are at times fully aware of the conditions which obtain in our lives, and may warn us, guide us and minister unto us. Yea, and at times those evilly minded may seek to interfere with the even tenor of the lives of the living.

The foregoing is the contention of Spiritualism. In the controversy I have stated the Catholic Church taught the same thing. Father Flanagan says my quotations do not prove that my contention is correct—he says there is “no sense in those quotations.” Yet other



authorities of the church seem to think they mean something. Quoting again from Father Gmeiner's book, "Spirits of Darkness," page 248, we read a question and answer, they follow:

"But must we therefor infer that there exists no real *intercommunication* between the living and the departed? That the spirits of the departed never manifest themselves to, or influence, their still living friends?"

The answer: "*By no means.* The church has *always* taught and believed in the communion of saints; that is of all true members of the church of Christ; of those who are still in the flesh, and of those who have departed this life in the friendship of God."

It would seem that Father Gmeiner believes that "intercommunication" means something more than just the "communication of spiritual blessings among the members of the church." Another question follows on page 249 of the same book. It is this:

"And why should not God, for good



reasons, occasionally permit departed friends to manifest themselves to the living?"

"St. Thomas but expresses the conviction of the church, when he says, 'by special dispensation of God, the souls of the departed may take an active interest in the affairs of the living; and that, moreover, sometimes good angels may cause seeming apparitions of dead persons; of course not to deceive people, but to encourage, assist and warn them; or to obtain aid for such as are in purgatory.'"

Father Flanagan concedes spiritual phenomena—or as he puts it, "spiritistic" phenomena. He says he does not "ascribe all phenomena caused by spirits to the agency of evil spirits." He does not deny that the "church and the Bible teach the existence of a spirit world." He could not very well do it. Then he says: "This is not the question. It rests with you, Rev. Erwood, to prove that the spirits masquerading as the souls of departed friends are the intelligence they say they are."

On the contrary, Father Flanagan, it lies with you to prove that they are not what they say they are. For myself I have had ample proof of the reality of the intelligence, and of the identity of those friends who have manifested to me. But you, my dear sir, have asserted that the phenomena of Spiritualism were the works of demons, using the word in the limited sense in which you have used it. And you have not made out a case at all. There is naught but your assertions to bear you out.

Manifestly the only fair thing for you to do, before you condemn, in wholesale, the phenomena and movement of Spiritualism, is to make a careful, conscientious and unbiased investigation. Father Flanagan seeks to dispose of the argument by asserting that he, "had not time to spare to attend the farce which you and the medium who the 'spirit messages' paraded before the public as communications from beyond the grave; neither could you reasonably expect that I would lose time listening to the groans

of your medium, or your own silly twaddle which you called a lecture."

Now, is that not a marvel of argumentative reasoning? Instead of answering my letter he springs the above on us. He characterizes what he did not hear as "groans" and "twaddle;" brave man—what a valorous champion of truth he is; what benevolence he displays! One fact remains: those to whom the communications were given acknowledged them to be correct. Yet he talks about "groans," etc. I imagine the groans he heard must have been the groanings of his own spirit because of his ineffectual attempt to dispose of Spiritualism.

And he adds further: "you cannot deny that much of your spiritistic rappings, whisperings, mysterious writings, etc., have been shown to be the result of deliberate fraud on the part of professional mediums." I very cheerfully concede that; I know as well as Father Flanagan that frauds have brought odium upon the question from time to time. But no more so than in other organiza-

tions. Nor does that fact prove the unreliability of all—nor yet does it disprove the validity of the main premises. And Spiritualists have frankly acknowledged the fact.

Proceeding with his *overwhelming* argument (?) Father Flanagan says: "If this has been the case with some of your greatest mediums we can well judge of what your obscure diviner had to offer." And in the face of this Father Flanagan has the temerity to speak of "unscrupulous opponent."

Here is his argument: because someone has been found guilty of fraud while posing as a Spiritualist, then, peradventure, the gentleman who accompanied me to Moundsville must be classed in the same category. What a magnanimous soul you are, to be sure, Father. You condemn, unheard, a man of whom and of whose work you know nothing.

Can you not bring forth something better than this, Father Flanagan? Do you not know that you are not using argument at all. Now let me say: you



cannot deny that "some professional priests" have been shown to be guilty of fraud, deliberate fraud. Shall I resort to your tactics and say as you: "if this has been the case with some of your priests we can well judge of what this obscure priest of Moundsville has to offer."

Shall I prejudge all of the Catholics of the world because some have been guilty of fraudulent practice. Shall I deny all the stories of the marvelous happenings in the lives of the "saints" of the Catholic Church because some of them are unreliable. Lingard, the Catholic historian, speaking of miracles, has this to say:

"There are also many which must shrink from the frown of criticism; some which may have been the effect of accident or imagination; some that are more calculated to excite the smile than the wonder of the readers; and some which \* \* \* depend on the distant testimony of writers but remarkable for sagacity or discrimination." See "Conway's Question Box," page 547.



Having read many of the accounts of these so-called miracles I can well testify to their power in provoking smiles rather than wonder. But, on the other hand, I have wondered how any man of intelligence could accept some of them.

Now, my good friend hastens to assure us that the Catholic clergy are feeling no uneasiness over Spiritualism. And he goes on to declare: "She does not lower her flag for even the spirits of darkness, nor does she fear their willing dupes, the Spiritualists. In the years to come 'modern Spiritualism' will be only recollected in name, like any of the other varieties of wickedness or folly, then the future ecclesiastical historian will write the thrilling record, namely, that of all the phases of irreligion 'modern Spiritualism' was the greatest humbug of any age."

Is that not a marvelous creation? I suppose I should tremble after this splendid (?) outburst. But somehow I cannot seem to feel a chill of apprehension. We have been quite accustomed

to such outbursts from the Father Flanagan's of the ages. They have prophesied the forgetting of numerous things—numerous movements, but the world seems to take them along just the same. Really his outburst looks like the aftermath of a great fear—a fear that must have prompted the action of the second plenary council of Baltimore in advising Catholics to keep away from Spiritualism, and this was as far back as 1866.

Father Flanagan talks of “furious antics and frenzied shrieks,” but we will let the readers of the paper look through our several articles for the “antics and frenzied shrieks,” and see to whom they belong. And my good friend tells how I “ride full tilt against ‘a portion of the finger of a dead Catholic’ only to find that the saints are friends of God, and their bones are worthy of respect.”

He means that we find the Father Flanagan's tell us that these “saints are the friends of God. We have but their word for it, and I am not sure that that is quite sufficient. He talks about evad-

ing and shifting about, and accuses me of garbling. I wonder what he has done—where has he met any argument? What has he adduced to prove his own contention?

What has he done other than to accuse me of nearly everything in the *Calendar*? And this because I refused to give him the name of the lady who quoted a priest; he knows full well how mightily unpleasant it might be for that lady should the priest in question have the same magnanimous (?) spirit as that displayed by my dear friend, Father Flanagan. And he says: "If the case you speak of was such a secret why did you make use of it on a public platform?" He knows full well that it is no infrequent thing for a man in public life to be told of experiences such as the one related, and to be requested not to divulge the name of the person concerned. We find this true in the lives of the "saints"—and names have been withheld until after the death of, say, Anthony of Padua, *et al.*

Now, Father Flanagan has had so much to say about Spiritualism and Spiritualists, will he tell me:

In what is a Catholic superior to a Spiritualist? Is he any better morally? Does he make a better citizen? Does he prove to be a better neighbor? Is he a better parent? Of what does his superiority consist? And what does Catholicism give to us that is superior to Spiritualism? Let him bring forth his array of formidable facts if he has any.

Tomorrow, Mr. Editor, I shall review Father Flanagan's choice collection of epithets, as presented in his letter of July 3. In the meantime he might busy himself gathering up another supply to use in the absence of argument.

WILL J. ERWOOD.

Wheeling, W. Va., *July 6, 1911.*

## Rev. Flanagan Replies to Last Article by Rev. Erwood

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

The apostle of Spiritism has again spoken. He has served up for the readers of the *Echo* a meal, as foul with falsehood and calumny, as was ever offered in support of a starved-out creed.

Though it seems a debasing of the mind further to refute the Spiritist's ravings, I, nevertheless, propose to examine his paragraphs, so far as they are relevant to the points at issue, and contain any semblance of common sense.

Leaving aside the preamble of his letter—with its keynote of "cry-baby"—for it is too foolish and silly to deserve even a passing notice, I shall now consider what the Baltimore sciolist has to say regarding the announcement to



answer my questions. Here are his words:

“And he makes much of the announcement which appeared in the issue of the *Echo* for June 8, which he reproduces, and which I presume is correct, though I have not seen the paper. Referring to the statement that ‘Rev. Erwood will answer the questions recently propounded by Rev. Father Flanagan,’ I have only this to say: I was not aware of such a notice being inserted in the paper. Anyone with a grain of sense would know that had I been aware of such an announcement I would not have been foolish enough to deny it, nor to request him to produce the article in which such announcement was made. I would have conceded the fact that, even though I knew nothing of the notice being printed the public would have been justified in expecting more attention to the questions than I gave them in the meeting.”

The above statement is something so inexpressibly sad in this poor man's stupidity, that I almost feel towards

him, a pity which masters indignation, and puts severity to flight.

His dodging of the difficulty here recalls his patent medicine advertisement argument (?). And it is worth about as much. It indicates feverishness. I wonder what kind of nerve tonic the medium takes! His ofttime foolishness is fast flowing into downright imbecility, and his attempt now to get out of the pit he dug for himself, exhibits him in the last stages of mental decrepitude.

In the words above quoted, your readers, Mr. Editor, have as good a sample of the wizard's elaborate and subtle reasoning as can possibly be given. Here I am irresistibly reminded of the crushing words of inspiration: "Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant."

The announcement of June 8, which I reproduced in my letter of July 1, has staggered Rev. W. J. Erwood, pastor of the First Spiritualist Church of Baltimore, Md. He declares that anyone with a grain of sense would know that

had he been aware of the announcement, he would not have been foolish enough to deny it, etc. In a recent letter he denied my statement about the announcement, now he admits that he denied it without knowing what he was talking about. And this is the man who dares to pose as a fair and honest controversialist! This is the spiritistic windbag who has such high ideas of "ministerial dignity."

*"Anyone with a grain of sense," Rev. Erwood, "would know" that if you had a grain of sense, and wished to be honest and fair, you would not have denied the appearance of the announcement, before you investigated the matter.*

The magician next tries to justify his conduct when he was asked for the name of the author of the book he quoted during his lectures. He says he did not say Father Gmeiner's book was out of print, but he thought it was. The parties who demanded the name of the author of the book maintain that he did say, the book was out of print.

Moreover, it is not so difficult to get a copy of Father Gmeiner's book. Any Catholic publisher will be glad to procure it for anyone who wishes to purchase it. Again, why was it necessary to demand the name of the author of the book from Rev. Erwood? Why was he not honest enough to give the name of the writer he cited? The fact is, the medium was garbling Father Gmeiner, and tried to make him teach doctrines which he repudiated.

Rev. Mr. Erwood thinks I only exposed my prejudice against "Spiritualism" instead of exposing Spiritism. I have no doubt about the verdict the readers of the *Echo* have arrived at, as to what has been exposed in the present controversy.

With his usual disgusting folly and impertinence, the necromancer lies again to evade the issue, saying:

"In trying to dispose of my quotations from Father Gmeiner's book he says: 'Rev. Erwood, you should study the penny catechism of the Catholic doctrine



before you undertake to explain the teachings of the Catholic Church.'”

When I wrote the words, quoted by Mr. Erwood, I was not disposing of his quotations from Father Gmeiner’s book, as anyone will easily see by turning to my letter which was published in the *Echo* of July 1. But I was taking the medium to task for giving a false view of the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints. Later on I disposed of his quotations from Father Gmeiner. I told him to study the penny catechism before he undertook to expound Catholic doctrines. To this he replied:

“My good friend does not know to whom he makes this remark. The first book that I ever learned to read was a Catholic catechism. The Bible History was a companion, and I have been familiar with Catholic practice all of my life, for nearly every member of my family on the maternal side, are members of the Catholic Church. I have listened to Father Conway expound the philosophy of that church, I have his “Ques-



tion Box," and the works of many other eminent priests of the Catholic Church. I am not unfamiliar with the Catholic doctrines."

The first book you, Mr. Erwood, learned to read was a Catholic catechism, forsooth! If this is true, then it is sadly apparent from your explanation of the doctrine of the communion of saints, that you never understood what you read in the catechism. But the fault lies not with your teachers who taught you the catechism, for they did not profess to give brains when you did not possess them. If you had them, they would have developed them so that you could understand what you read in the catechism.

And you have listened to Father Conway expound Catholic philosophy, and you have the works of other eminent priests. Indeed! Have you? Well it is not the fault of Father Conway, or the other eminent priests, if you are yet densely ignorant of Catholic teachings, for even the renowned Paulist lecturer,

Father Conway, and all the eminent priests this world ever knew, could not in the words of a great writer, "make a silk purse of a sow's ear."

Again I advise Mr. Erwood to make himself acquainted with the first principles of Catholic teachings, of which he has shown himself so profoundly ignorant, even though the first book he learned to read was a Catholic catechism. I also recommend that he devote at least twenty-five years to the diligent study of the penny catechism, and meanwhile refrain from trying to explain the elementary points of Catholic faith. Judging from his letters it will take him about a quarter of a century before he can master the eight or ten pages of the penny catechism. If he takes to heart my admonitions, they will save him from the renewal of the disgrace and humiliation brought upon him by his ignorance of the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints.

Rev. Erwood holds up his hands in protesting horror because I said his

quotations from Father Gmeiner's book, which formed a great part of his letter, were not to the point. If your readers, Mr. Editor, will read again Rev. Erwood's letter of June 27, and my reply thereto of July 1, they will then see for themselves of what shameless and deliberate mendacity, relative to the quotations the medium has rendered himself guilty.

Following his custom, my opponent again fills up his letter with quotations from Father Gmeiner's "Spirits of Darkness," but, as usual, they are not to the point and prove nothing, except his deliberate attempt to misrepresent. I am in perfect accord with Father Gmeiner's doctrine, but not in the way Rev. Erwood has distorted it. To show how outrageously wicked and malicious the spiritist can be in his disregard of all logic, and his violation of all the laws of manly and straight forward polemic, I ask the readers of the *Echo* to consider the following:

"Father Flanagan concedes Spiritual phenomena—or, as he puts it, 'spiritistic'

phenomena. He says, he does not 'ascribe all phenomena caused by spirits to the agency of evil spirits.' He does not deny that the 'church and the Bible teach the existence of a spirit world.' He could not very well do it. Then he says: 'This is not the question. It rests with you, Rev. Erwood, to prove that the spirits masquerading as the souls of departed friends are the intelligences they say they are.'

"On the contrary, Father Flanagan, it lies with you to prove that they are not what they say they are. For myself I have ample proof of the reality of the intelligence, and of the identity of those friends who have manifested to me. But you, my dear sir, have asserted that the phenomena of Spiritualism were the works of demons, using the word in the limited sense in which you have used it. And you have not made out a case at all. There is naught but your assertions to bear you out."

The cowardice here displayed by Rev. Erwood in thus sneaking out of a diffi-



culty, instead of manfully meeting it, forcefully emphasizes the character, controversial methods, and blatant dishonesty of my Spiritistic opponent.

He says, it lies with me to prove that the spirits masquerading as the souls of departed friends at Spiritistic seances, are not what they say they are. Let us examine this question and see on whom the burden of proof rests. In the *Echo* of June 3, the Spiritists challenged me to ask questions on "Spiritualism." In my first letter, published June 6, among other questions I asked, why is it so difficult to establish the identity of the manifesting intelligences? The medium tried to answer this question as well as some of the others I proposed. He did not succeed. He resorted to all kinds of maneuvers, lies, calumnies and tricks, to evade the difficulty. He tried to lead the readers of the *Echo* away from the point by multiplying quotations from Father Gmeiner's book absolutely alien to the question in hand. I tracked him through all his wanderings.



I kept his nose to the grindstone, and now after writing a series of several letters, he virtually admits he cannot answer my question or prove his own thesis. He started out to prove, in answer to my question, how to establish the identity of the spirits communicating at Spiritistic seances, and now ends by saying to me, you prove it.

I proved, in my lecture, that the difficulty of satisfactorily establishing the identity of the spirits communicating was universally admitted by all expert inquirers, and also by all experienced and fair-minded Spiritists. The Spiritists assailed my position. They challenged me to ask questions. I did so. Their champion did not successfully answer even one of my questions. Now when pressed for an answer to one of the questions, he skulks and hides behind the dark fence of such bolderdash as this, "Father Flanagan it lies with you to prove, etc."

The medium goes on with his noisy nonsense, he is evidently much hurt

about what I said concerning his lecture and the groans of his medium. He says, "The fact remains; those to whom the communications were given acknowledged them to be correct." Do not be so sure, Mr. Erwood. Some denied the truth of the communications. Many who attended the meeting, declared your spirit messages to be downright fraud. At any rate, judging from the accounts given by intelligent people, other than Spiritists, who attended your meetings, I believe I lost nothing by not attending your rendition of Mother Goose's Melodies.

Whilst treating of this phase of the medium's letter, I noticed that he very carefully avoids answering my question which I asked in my last letter regarding the person who said I would attend his meetings. There is little else in the Spiritistic minister's communication that rises above the jargon of the inmates of an insane asylum. I wish, however, to direct attention to one more statement of his. It is as follows: "What has he done other than to accuse me of nearly

everything in the *Calendar*? And this because I refused to give him the name of the lady who quoted the priest; he knows full well how mightily unpleasant it might be for that lady should the priest in question have the same magnanimous (?) spirit as that displayed by my dear friend, Father Flanagan. And he says, 'If the case you speak of was such a secret why did you make use of it on a public platform?' He knows full well that it is no infrequent thing for a man in public life to be told of experiences such as the one related, and to be requested not to divulge the name of the person concerned. We find this true in the lives of the 'Saints,' and names have been withheld until after the death of, say, Anthony of Padua, *et al.*'

Here the soothsayer is evidently ill at ease because of my liberal use of the "shillalah." In this discussion I asked no quarter from my opponent—I will give none. On him I will have no mercy, controversially speaking, and I have about as much sympathy for him, as

the great St. Paul had for "Alexander the Coppersmith" for whom he desired "a reward according to his works." He has maligned the Catholic Church. He has misrepresented her teachings. The duty of speaking out in defense of my position on Spiritism has been cast upon me. I have only defended my views when attacked. I have given the true Catholic teachings, as opposed to Rev. Erwood's mere Spiritistic vagaries.

He says I know full well that it is no infrequent thing for a man in public life not to divulge the names, etc. I know full well that this is only a subterfuge of yours, and that the statement you made about a priest advising a lady to continue to be a Spiritist, is foully false.

In your issue of July 11, Mr. Editor, Rev. Erwood promised another letter. As soon as it appears I shall consider it. In the meantime I beg to assure him that I have yet in store a "choice collection" of epithets for his future consideration.

F. J. FLANAGAN.

Moundsville, W. Va., *July 12, 1911.*





## Rev. Erwood's Final Article on Spiritualism

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EDITOR MOUNDSVILLE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

In his letter of July 3, my good friend, Father Flanagan, has wielded his facile pen to no other purpose than to display a choice collection of epithets behind which cloudy products he thinks to conceal his failure to dispose of Spiritualism.

Examination of his letter will show but little that can lay claim to reasonable argument; the main stock in trade of my gentle brother is such ill-chosen similes as one would expect to find in the vocabulary of a stevedore, rather than in the usage of one who occupies the high pinnacle of Catholic placidity and gentleness upon which Father Flanagan is supposed to rest.

And after Father Flanagan has carried his tirade thru four columns of the *Echo*

he blares forth with this: "Why do you sally out to break lances with other people's windmills, etc." Really, I have had a suspicion from the very first that my lance was meeting nothing but a "windmill," but I feared my good friend would not admit it as readily as he has. Now I observe that that "windmill" is so very intangible that there is small danger of my "lance" being broken. Come again, Father.

It is singular that a man who must make use of the terminology that pervades his effusions would accuse anyone of "quibbling, sophistry, equivocations, etc.," for his whole effort is to cast odium upon Mr. Erwood and Spiritualism. And to do this he resorts to tactics and language that he would scarce utilize if facing a man. Hiding behind his clerical garb and sanctimonious office he finds no better weapons than these: "conjuror, reviler, senility, like a malicious hag, black arts, sophist, green gooseberry, ignoble brow, etc." Dear readers, is this not a choice collec-

tion to emanate from one who supposes himself to be in the line of apostolic succession?

And in his attempt to get out of the matter he talks about "odds and ends of quotations from Father Gmeiner's 'Spirits of Darkness;'" I can well imagine that those "odds and ends" cause him no little annoyance, for they present a phase of the discussion that he cannot get around.

Now he tells me: "Yes, the Catholic Church does teach that the souls of the dead may return. I never denied this. It is idle and foolish in you, Mr. Erwood, to insinuate that I did. I did not say that it was only in the Catholic Church that good spirits may appear, etc." Here my reverend friend makes an admission that is quite worthy. *He admits that the return of good spirits is not confined to the Catholic Church.* No, Father, there is no need to remind me that you did not say that in so many words, but it is there.

Then Father Flanagan informs us that

“it is very seldom, generally speaking, that God permits the return to this earth of departed spirits.” Is it so, indeed? We are grateful for the information—but, I pray you, sir, will you give us the source of that knowledge. How do you know that this is a seldom occurrence? If the return of spirits is such a rare thing, how is it that there are so many records of such phenomena in the lore of the Catholic Church.

Reading the lives of the “Saints,” it would appear that such a return was not only a daily, but an hourly occurrence. Here then is the question: If the return of the dead is admitted to be a fact; if it is conceded that the return of “good spirits” is not confined to the Catholic Church, what right has Father Flanagan, or any other prominent or obscure priest, to assert that Spiritualism is in its entirety the work of demons of evil propensity?

Father Flanagan uses the same kind of argument against Spiritualism as that used against Jesus, John the Baptist, and



the Apostles, viz.: "they are possessed of devils." And with this he thinks the matter settled entirely.

He is still talking about Hudson Tuttle's admission that there had been unpleasant experiences in his early mediumship, and says that I evade the issue when I considered Mr. Tuttle's admission as no argument against Spiritualism. He devotes nearly a column of the paper to this—he is eager to have the people think he has made out a case. But he has failed dismally. He says: "I was proving that Spiritism was fraught with dangers." Continuing he says:

"I proved it by Hudson Tuttle's experiences, Rev. Erwood cannot deny this \* \* \* it is not a question of whether Tuttle did or did not at any time commit suicide or kill, but the point we are considering is that the evil spirits had such influence over him that it was with difficulty that he escaped suicide on one occasion and murder on another. If Spiritism was so dangerous for Mr. Hudson Tuttle is it less so for others?"



Father Flanagan thinks this to be *prima facie* evidence of the sweepingly dangerous nature of Spiritualism. Does he not see that such a flimsy argument as that would effectually dispose of his own dogma? Does he think it has only been the "Hudson Tutttles" of Spiritualism who have thus experienced temptation? If there is any argument in such a position where would you be, Father Flanagan?

The choicest "saints" in the constantly increasing number in the Catholic Church have been the most grievously tempted. Father Flanagan objects to my quotation from Father Gmiener, in which is incorporated a quotation from the author of the "Following of Christ," proving that even the "saints" were subjected to all kinds of difficulty, and tempted in every way. This despite the fact that they were Catholics, and on the high road to "saintship." Father Flanagan, no doubt would say, "God was merely testing them." Is it necessary to quote specific instances, Father?

When discussing the matter he says: "Off the track again, Mr. Erwood, this only proves that we have enough to do to avoid temptations, without exposing ourselves to them unnecessarily." Don't mislead yourself, Father, I am still on the track. Your arguments are so "overwhelming" (?) that you are the only one they will overwhelm. And while you may succeed in making yourself think you have made a point, you will not thus mislead others.

The only thing Father Flanagan proved by his quotation was that Mr. Tuttle related an experience that might come in the life of anyone, at any time, my reverend opponent not excepted. If Father Flanagan could prove that every Spiritualist was thus beset, if he could prove that every intelligence who manifests in the seance room works evil, if he could demonstrate that Spiritualism does have a deleterious effect on the lives of those who espouse its principles, then he might have a case. But as it is he is simply hurling boomerangs—and

they are stinging himself more than they do us.

What does Hudson Tuttle's authorship of books, ethically instructive prove? This: that Hudson Tuttle's mediumship, or his few unpleasant experiences did not affect the moral, mental or spiritual nature of the man, nor prevent him from trying to add to the sum of spiritual and moral culture.

Now Father Flanagan accuses me of attempting to divert the attention of the readers from his arguments—the “overwhelming force (?) of my arguments,” he says. And he declares: “the sophisticator utters a lachrymose jeremiade, and like a whipped schoolboy, condemns Dr. Raupert on the slender testimony of having lectured against Spiritism under the auspices of Catholic institutions.” Bright argument that. (?) Let the readers turn to what I said of Dr. Raupert they will see I simply called attention to a fact that Father Flanagan was careful not to reveal.

The trouble with Father Flanagan,

probably, is that he has mainly had to do with "whipped schoolboys," and has been in the habit of dictating to such without fear of contradiction. He is trying the same tactics here, and he quotes a few more passages from Dr. Raupert's book as evidence of his claims. He is simply threshing over old straw; we admit there have been dangers—that there is danger in everything.

Rev. Flanagan seems to think that his quotation from the "Dangers of Spiritualism," by Godfrey Raupert, and his citations from the works of Hudson Tuttle and M. Stainton Moses, have effectually proved Spiritualism a manifestly dangerous thing, and of demoniac origin. I am surprised at him resting upon such untenable ground. How many instances of like character we might quote against his own church.

Father Flanagan, in what is intended to be his most crushing manner, asks: "Are you still under the influence of the patent medicine advertised in the *Wheeling Calendar*? or have you changed from



Koenig's Tonic to Peruna?" Is that not a splendid effort for my friend to make? Poor Father Flanagan. If only as small amount of "tonic" of any description passes his lips as finds its way through mine, he is a lucky man. I am afraid that Father Koenig's Nerve Tonic, advertised in the *Calendar*, and endorsed by Father Riorden, has gotten the better of Father Flanagan's nerves.

Now we have Rev. Flanagan admitting that some of the greatest scientists believe in the spirit hypothesis. "I am well aware of the fact," he adds, "that men of great reputation, as scientists, have given their testimony in favor of the reality of Spiritualistic phenomena. This is not the question. I never disputed this." Yet we have him recently asserting that the cautious scientists did not commit themselves to the point of belief in the identity of the communicating spirit. At present he concedes that some of the "greatest" scientists believe our hypothesis.

Father Flanagan chortles with glee



over my quotations from Alfred Russel Wallace and Sir Oliver Lodge. And he gets off a poor sort of fulmination about "neglected pupils of a poorly conducted kindergarten, etc." There may have been something wrong with my earliest experiences at school—indeed I have sometimes felt there was, since I received them in a school which was directly under the supervision of a man something like Father Flanagan seems to be—a man of his own faith and cloth. If there is deficiency it is due to the "poorly conducted kindergarten" to which my parents were unwise enough to send me.

I have fully expected that Father Flanagan would take the position he does—it runs in line with his type of mind and his school of thought; what he and his ilk cannot answer they attribute to "devils, senility, to wizards and witches to conjurors and black art." If my friend was as voluble in other lines as he is in making use of his pet epithets he might accomplish greater

good than he can under the present condition of his mind.

Taking advantage of a slight typographical error he thinks he has disposed of my Wallace quotation. There was no question embodied in Prof. Wallace's statement. That statement was: "*It, physical research, further demonstrates, by direct evidence as conclusive as the nature of the case admits that the so-called dead are alive—that our friends are often with us, though unseen, and can give direct proof of a future life which so many crave, but for want of which so many live and die in anxious doubt.*"

There is no "if" in the above quotation, though thru a slight typographical error the word "if" was inserted in place of "*it*;" so also in my quotation concerning the Catholic Church there is a slight error, to wit: "It is singular that a church which has so much *lore* concerning the dead and their interest in the living, etc." The word "*lore*" was rendered "*more*."

Father Flanagan tells us: "Inconsist-

ency thou art a jewel, but only in the eyes of Rev. Erwood and his Spiritists." But he fails to point out the inconsistency; his argument is about this: "All men who live in Moundsville are honest men; those who live elsewhere are dishonest." He is the man who is inconsistent, he has hugged the asp of inconsistency to the breast so zealously that he is unable to see it is stinging him to the death.

Father Flanagan admits spirit phenomena; he admits the dead can return; he concedes that men who have gone to heaven, and some who have not attained to that height, do return. His church lore teems with account after account of instances of this character; the greatest man in the Catholic Church in America, James, Cardinal Gibbons, exclaims: "O, far be from us the dreary thought that death cuts off our friends entirely from us," etc. The "Faith of Our Fathers," page 156.

Before me as I write are four different publications of the Catholic Church, viz: *The Calendar*, the *Ave Maria*, *St.*

*Anthony's Monthly*, the *Souvenir Year Book*, of St. Bernard's Church in Baltimore; in addition to these numerous "lives" of the "Saints;" and in every one of these, with one single exception, are to be found one or more accounts of the return of men and women, from either purgatory or heaven, to the denizens of earth. All of this he admits, does Father Flanagan.

Then he admits that the return of "good spirits" is not confined to the Catholic Church; he believes in the all-wisdom of God; in his omnipotence and omniscience, as well as omnipresence; he believes that God is changeless; that the same divine rule obtains today as of yore; he believes in spiritual gifts; he believes in the statement accredited to Jesus: "These things that I do so shall ye also," etc. He believes: "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." Eccles. III.

All of this Father Flanagan believes and admits, yet in the face of it all he



comes to us with the warped statement: "It is perfectly conformable then, to the teaching of reason, to conclude that evil spirits or demons are the agents of all such effects in Spiritism which cannot be attributed to human power. "Inconsistency" thou hast so thoroughly absorbed my Brother Flanagan that the spirit of inanity hath builded her throne in his dwarfed and feeble mind; remove the scales from his eyes, I pray thee, that he may see that the sun still shines without and that truth has not been concealed in musty tombs and cloistered cells.

After conceding so much as he has, Father Flanagan gets off this despairing cry: "But I do defy you to prove that the authors of the spiritistic wonders are really the spirits of the departed friends they say they are." He talks about "lachrymose jeremiades," but 'twas the rebounding echo of the last wail of a dying hope which reverberated through the walls of his consciousness, that super-induced his tearful lamentation. It is small wonder that Rev. Flanagan must



run to a "green gooseberry" patch to find a simile small enough to come within the scope of his narrow comprehension.

Can you, Father Flanagan, prove that these be not the spirits of our departed friends? How will you go about it? Did you not make the opening attack on Spiritualism in your lecture? How have you sustained your theory? You must indeed bring forth better than you have thus far produced to make even a remote approach to success.

And what is your actual experience with the subject—to what extent have you come in personal contact with these phenomena and the people who accept them.

If Father Flanagan could only see it Spiritualism is the best friend humanity has when it comes to the demonstration of some of the very things he would have mankind believe. Spiritualism has been, and is the enemy of materialism—it has been successful in bringing many a man from materialism who could not be reached by the Father Flanagans of the world.

Prof. Robert Hare is a good example of the extent to which Spiritualism has defeated materialism. Prof. Hare was a sincere but inveterate disbeliever of Christianity; he doubted immortality, the existence of a God, etc. He investigated Spiritualism; he found phenomena which carried with them proof of identity. And he reasoned: "If my sister lives, as she has proven to me, I shall live also, and there is an immortality, and if an immortality, there must be—there is a God." And he added: "I believe in revelation, and in a revelation through Jesus of Nazereth I am a Christian."

Possibly Father Flanagan would not have a man converted to a practical Christianity through any other channel than his own church. Prof. Challis, of Cambridge, has said: "\* \* \* the testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."

There is but one way to prove such

phenomena—to prove anything for that matter. Perhaps 'twere better to say there are three ways of disposing of a given subject. They are: First—To ridicule, or laugh it out of court. Second—To denounce it in toto as either inimical to human welfare, the work of devils or insane vagary. Third—\* \* \* and this is obviously the only just way—to investigate carefully, conscientiously and sincerely. Now, reader, which is the way you will follow?

Father Flanagan is wedded to the first two methods of procedure, hence he is trying to scare people away with his denunciations, his quotations from Dr. Raupert's book—which one has only to read to see the motive back of the whole thing—and several citations from works of Spiritualist authors who have frankly admitted a few unpleasant experiences.

Father Flanagan says: "Will my exponent of Spiritualism dare assert that the average Spiritistic 'sitter' does not demand of the medium an indiscriminate use of psychic powers?" Indeed I dare

assert that very thing Father Flanagan. The average Spiritualistic "sitter" does not demand of the medium an indiscriminate use of psychic power. The "Spiritualist sitter" knows better than to do so. Those who are in the habit of demanding an "indiscriminate use of psychic power" are usually people who have been trained on the "fairy pabulum" you feed them concerning the miracles, etc., in the lives of your "saints," dead and otherwise.

We know that not all Spiritualists have learned thus much, but the average Spiritualist has, and asks no unreasonable or indiscriminate use of psychic power. Would you dare assert that there are no abuses of your own usages, not excepting any of them?

When men doubt immortality they come to Spiritualism to get proof of its reality; they do not go to Father Flanagan for evidence. And there are probably more people out of the Catholic Church investigating, and becoming convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, than from



any other. We do not ask that they stultify reason—we ask them to use it; we do not ask them to accept everything that purports to be spiritual phenomena, superinduced by the discarnate friends of humanity—we ask them to test the phenomena, and demand proof of identity, etc.

Spiritualism lays stress upon the necessity of character building—it teaches that each person *must suffer* for his transgression; that there is no evasion of that law. It urges spiritual unfoldment—real unfoldment; it is humanitarian—Spiritualists have been uniformly moved to participate in progressive and humanitarian work. All along the line of human progression will be found, well in the vanguard, men and women who have been, and are ardent Spiritualists.

Then Father Flanagan speaks of conceit, and says: “Who gave you authority, Medium Erwood, to thrust forward your fallible judgment, your warped and weak reason, your little notions, your uncharitable heart, your hungry creed, and your



rule of conduct, dictated by the spirits of darkness, as the standard of the great world's life?"

Who gave me the right to speak, Father? The eternal law which gives to every man the right to defend himself and those he loves from the cowardly and arrogant egotists who, in their inflated self adoration, and their petty conception of the infinite order of things, take it upon themselves to villify and abuse that which does not come within the scope of their contracted purview.

And you, Father Flanagan, a priest of the Catholic Church, talk to me about: "little notions, hungry creed, warped and weak reason, fallible judgment," etc. And all of this after the inane display you have given us in your supposed "critiques;" you talk about "hypocrisy and ignoble brows." Better carry a mirror until you have learned "to know thee as thou art." You talk of all of this after having displayed every one of these qualities, in your effusions. Be good enough to examine those letters of

yours and discover to us your "charitable heart and mighty reason."

Who gives me the authority to "thrust forward" my opinions? The law which guarantees to us, through the constitution, the right to defend our religion from the attacks of a man, who, if his charitable (?) heart might have its wish would, no doubt, eliminate, not only Spiritualism but many other religious movements from the arena of human life.

Should my good friend contribute further choice collections of epithets, of which he no doubt has still an abundant, unused supply, I shall be glad to give them whatever of attention they may merit. Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for your courtesy, I am,

Yours for human progress,

WILL J. ERWOOD.

Wheeling, W. Va., *July 8.*

## Rev. Flanagan Closes the Discussion on Spiritism

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ECHO,"

DEAR SIR:

When St. Jude described certain teachers as "raging waves of the sea foaming out their own confusion," he must have had in prophetic view the Pastor of the First Spiritualist Church of Baltimore, Md., and some such exhibition as that contained in your columns of last Saturday. The prince of garblers and tergiversators grows more surprising every day. No one who has read his last letter can help seeing his malignity and meanness, platitude and perversity, decrepitude of cankered intelligence and desperation of humiliated vanity. In the first four paragraphs of his letter of July 15, the sweet-tempered medium appeals to his "dear readers" for sympathy. In very weariness of spirit he

complains of my "choice collection of epithets." The gist of his wailings may be reduced to the following:

"Hiding behind his clerical garb and sanctimonious office he finds no better weapons than these 'conjuror, reviler, senility, like a malicious hag, black arts, sophist, green gooseberry, ignoble brow,' etc. Dear readers, is this not a choice collection to emanate from one who supposes himself to be in line of apostolic succession?"

If in my letters I have used strong language I think all fair-minded readers of the *Echo* will agree that I have received provocation.

Who commenced the offensive in this discussion? Turn to my first letter of June 6. Is there one obligation imposed on me and quite another on Mr. Erwood? My opponent was the first to descend from the platform of courteous language to the floor of personalities. I have met him there—

"Dareful, beard to beard,  
And beat him backward home."

I do not intend to defend the propriety of every expression I may have used in my letters, but at the same time I am not prepared to apologize for any. If my Spiritistic friend now finds his plumage much ruffled, he brought it upon himself. I have only carried out the determination I expressed in my letter of July 14, to apply the words of the wisest of men, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he imagines himself to be wise." —Proverbs 26:5, to Mr. Erwood. I have answered him according to his folly. Now writhing in pain finding himself beaten at his own game, he cries for the sympathy of his readers.

He speaks of me hiding behind my clerical garb and sanctimonious office, etc. Your readers, Mr. Editor, know very well who has tried to hide. Mr. Erwood tried to hide behind all that was foul and false, and now that I have made his name a watch-word of infamy among all honest and truth-loving men, he tries to hide behind the sympathy of your readers.



I have no need to hide. I have met my opponent honestly and fairly.

He met my arguments with misrepresentation and calumny, he tried to make Catholic authors teach doctrines which they repudiated, he endeavored to make his hungry creed respectable by trying to prove it the same thing as the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints. He wilfully and maliciously denied the truth of my statements, and if after all this, he thinks I should maintain a mild tone towards him, he is much mistaken. I view him in the same light as the meek Saviour of mankind viewed the Pharisees when he called them "whited sepulchres," "hypocrites," "filthiness and dead men's bones." Judging him by his letters he is in the same class as the pharisees of old. Therefore, meeting my controversial bushwhacker with visor up, I shall not hesitate to deal blows direct and heavy and to indulge in such severity of comments as I think his errors at once so extreme and grotesque imperatively demand.

The diviner rides in full panoply

against my arguments anent his quotations from Father Gmeiner saying:

“And in his attempt to get out of the matter he talks about ‘odds and ends of the quotations from Father Gmeiner’s *Spirits of Darkness*;

 I can well imagine that these odds and ends cause him no little annoyance, for they present a phase of the discussion that he cannot get around.”

You can imagine almost anything but the points at issue. Anyone who read your arguments and the quotations you put forward in support of them will readily see that it is in very truth your imagination that speaks. No sane man acquainted with the premises, could imagine as you do that the quotations you gave from Father Gmeiner’s book had any bearing on the question. You say they had, but this is the pure creation of your own muddled and opaque brain. The great trouble with the medium is that he does not understand what he reads, and therefore he misapplies it. I am asked by Mr. Erwood, how do I

know that departed spirits, very seldom, generally speaking, return to this earth.

I know it on the testimony of the greatest theologians and philosophers, Protestants, Catholic and Jewish, that this world has ever heard of.

I wish further to instruct the medium on the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding the appearance of spirits.

I first quote his words:

“Reading the lives of the ‘Saints’ it would appear that such a return was not only daily, but an hourly occurrence.” Here then is the question: “if the return of the dead is admitted to be a fact; if it is conceded that the return of ‘good spirits’ is not confined to the Catholic Church, what right has Father Flanagan or any other prominent or obscure priest to assert that Spiritualism is in its entirety the work of demons of evil propensity?”

I shall first consider the question: Can a disembodied soul communicate to a soul not yet freed by death from the body?

The answer of the greatest theologians

is in the negative. It is substantially this: Our mind or intellect, in the present state of union of soul and body, can be reached by a mere creature whether corporeal or spiritual only through the medium of the imagination, inasmuch as we are naturally led by those sensible images into the knowledge of truth. Now, the soul departed from the body has no power whatever over the phantasms of our imagination, because matter is not subject to its sway as regards local motion; and therefore a disembodied soul cannot by itself illuminate or instruct us in any way.

But what of the apparitions of spirits? Treating of this same question, one of the greatest theologians of our times—Lepicier—answers:

“These apparitions take place through the instrumentality of angels who are able to reproduce the likeness of any person living or dead and who can act and speak as such persons once did. And as angels can know the thoughts of the departed, they can in that way



communicate them to the living, thus justifying their names and being envoys as it were or representatives, whose utterances may be taken as proceeding from the particular person whom they represent.

“Now we have to make a distinction between the angels themselves. Some of them are good, others have fallen from their high estate. The former are God’s ministers and never act in the visible world except at His command; the bad angels, on the other hand, are bent on rebellion against God, and habitually claim for themselves the responsibility of their actions, although they also at times are bound to act as the ministers of God’s justice. Hence it follows that the visible effects which good angels cause in this world are always brought about by them through God’s agency, and therefore are all miracles; whereas the effects produced by bad angels are generally due to their own private action, in which case they are not miracles. The apparitions of the dead, then, are



miracles when taking place through the ministry of good angels; they are no miracles when taking place through the action of bad angels, unless these be acting at God's bidding."

But Mr. Erwood asks me why I assert that spiritistic manifestations are the works of the devil.

We have seen that a departed soul cannot by itself illuminate or instruct us in any way. But we know that cautious scientists have made useful discoveries on this score and have received such instructions in the seance room. Since the display of mysterious force which operated in the seance room, during the researches of the eminent scientists cannot be attributed to the dead, angels must be held responsible for it. But to what class or order of angels are these effects to be ascribed? Not to the good angels since the canon of heaven is against such a course. Holy Scripture condemns the practice of Spiritism in the strongest possible terms.

"Neither let there be found among

you anyone that consulted soothsayers or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard or charmer, nor anyone that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, *or that seeketh the truth from the dead.*”—Deut. 18:10, 11.

I said, therefore, viewing the matter from a Christian and scientific standpoint, it was logical to conclude that the devils or demons or fallen angels, were the authors of all such effects in modern Spiritism, that are not trickery and fraud, or cannot be attributed to human power.

The Spiritists speak of the accounts of the appearance of spirits recorded in the lives of the saints. He says they are numerous. The same is true of the Bible. We read there in numerous passages of the appearances of spirits.

But how different is all this from the mode of procedure in the seance room. Why is it necessary to make use of the mediums? Why the horns, trumpets, dark room, etc., etc.?

If God sees fit to allow spirits to appear why the use of a medium?

I know the Spiritists try to justify their course, and in their blindness, refer to the well-known Scriptural narrative of the consulting of the woman of Endor by King Saul. But this cannot be said to be owing to the witch's magic, since Samuel appeared before she had time to begin her incantations.

Moreover, the Bible in another place condemned Saul's action. "So Saul died for his iniquities, because he transgressed the commandment of the Lord, which He had commanded and kept it not; and moreover, consulted also a witch, and trusted not in the Lord, therefore He slew him and transferred his kingdom to David, the King of Isai."—Paralip. 10:13–14.

I concede all the great scientists teach concerning the Spiritistic phenomena, but I maintain the souls of the dead do not produce the phenomena referred to; and that the fallen angels, the devils, are the originators of the phenomena in question. It is they, who in response to the mediums, masquerade as the souls

of the dead, and thus carry on, with devilish malice, their warfare against Heaven, with the object of bringing about the ruin of souls.

The necromancer again speaks of Hudson Tuttle's experience. He devotes seven paragraphs to this phase of his subject. He also speaks of D. Raupert, trots out again his patent medicine and consumes four more paragraphs. He proves nothing, there is neither sense or argument in his words, and the eleven paragraphs are nothing more or less than a monument of his incomparable foolishness.

He finds fault with what I said about the scientists who have investigated the phenomena of Spiritism. He says:

"Now we have Rev. Flanagan admitting that some of the greatest scientists believe in the spirit hypothesis. 'I am well aware of the fact,' he adds, 'that men of great reputation as scientists, have given their testimony in favor of the reality of Spiritualistic phenomena. This is not the question, I never dis-



puted this.' Yet we have him recently asserting that the cautious scientists did not commit themselves to the point of belief in the identity of the communicating spirit. At present he concedes that some of the 'greatest' scientists believe our hypothesis."

This is indeed a cruel nemesis. It reminds one of a big dunce in a classroom, at the blackboard doing a problem in addition. He adds up the figures written on the board, say 3-4-2-6 and writing down the result of the operation twenty, exclaims with a triumph in his voice, *Twenty!* while all the rest of the class very plainly see that the result is fifteen, not twenty. I ask the readers of the *Echo* to be the class for the nonce, while the Spiritistic acrobat and contortionist evolves his exegesis of the spirit hypothesis.

All thru this discussion I professed my belief in the world of spirits. I likewise denied that the spirits claiming to be the souls of the dead were the intelligences they say they are. I said the greatest



scientists believe in the reality, but they did not profess belief in the identity of the spirits manifesting. This is my position. Anyone can read the same in substance in my last letter.

Here is a good sample of what the scientists have to say. W. F. Barrett, Professor of Experimental Physics, in the University of Ireland, declared: "What I am prepared to assert, from my own experience is that neither hallucination, imposture, mal-observation, misdescription nor any other well-organized cause can account for the phenomena I have witnessed, and that the simplest explanation is the spirit hypothesis."

The simplest explanation, says the professor and the scientists with him, is the spirit hypothesis, as opposed to hallucinations, imposture, etc. This is as far as he goes. Eminent scientists began their investigations, after excluding all possibility of fraud and trickery, and then admitted that the most reasonable explanation for the phenomena witnessed was that it was the work of spirits.

They do not, however, say, as the medium tries to make them say, the authors of the wonders they beheld, were the souls of the dead. The scientists admit the reality of the phenomena they witnessed, but they do not assert that the intelligences are the souls of the dead; in fact they state that there does not exist evidence which would warrant that conclusion.

But yet, the medium in his blindness jumps at the conclusion that because, the scientists believe in the spirit theory they also believe that the departed souls are the authors of the spiritistic wonders.

Shakespeare, with prophetic vision, seems to have had in mind just such men as the Spiritistic pastor when he penned these lines:

“But when we in our viciousness grow hard,  
The wise gods seal our eyes;  
In our own slime drop our clear judgment, make us  
Adore our errors; laugh at us while we strut  
To our confusion.”

The remaining portion of Mr. Erwood's letter is such a confused and illogical jumble, and is so at variance to the

question under consideration, that it deserves very little notice.

I do not think the readers of the *Echo* are very much interested in the conjuror's early training. Yet he deems it important to mention the school and its director, etc., to which his parents sent him. But the fault was not with the school. Mr. Erwood attended, as I said in my last letter, but with the medium's lack of brains.

In speaking of the green gooseberry bush my opponent tried to be witty. But it did not become him for he had nothing back of it to sustain him.

He asks how I will sustain my theory that Spiritism is the work of the devil. This I answered above, when I replied to his question contained in the seventh paragraph of his letter.

Anxious to make a point in favor of his false creed he tells of what Spiritism has done to destroy materialism. It is a very small thing that Spiritism destroys materialism in some men. This concession is not made by the arch-enemy of

mankind without adequate compensation and without his using it as a means of furthering his own ultimate ends.

I have now finished my consideration of the Spiritist's letter. I have spoken of everything in it of importance. I wish now, in a few words to refer to my task during this controversy.

I was challenged to ask questions on Spiritism. I did so. My opponent did not answer successfully even one of my questions. I was not called upon to prove the reality of the Spiritistic phenomena or the identity of the spirits, or anything else. My task was to see that my questions were correctly answered. I have accomplished my work. Mr. Erwood failed miserably in his efforts.

I cannot better conclude this discussion on Spiritism than in the words of a master mind who made a deep study of the subject.

“He who diligently seeks for truth can find it both in the books of nature and revelation, and need not have recourse to deceitful and masquerading spirits.

“If we desire temporal and spiritual favors, an easy way is open to us, it is that of recourse to humble prayer in conformity to the law and will of the Almighty, the giver of all good. If we yearn for happiness, we have a pledge of coming bliss in the promise of the vision of God, face to face. But the fulfillment of this promise is made dependent on one condition: the practice of good works in the observance of the divine law. ‘Make me to understand the way of thy justifications, and I shall be exercised in thy wondrous works.’—Psalm 118:27.”

I beg to add only a few words more before ending. In your issue of Monday, July 10, Mr. Editor, you referred to the present discussion on Spiritism in these words:

“The *Echo* believes that its readers have had opportunity to form conclusions one way or another on the matter of Spiritism or Spiritualism from the series of articles published during the past several weeks, and further, local



events are on the calendar in the near future that will doubtless require all our typesetting facilities, therefore, we deem it fair all around to close the series after Rev. Father Flanagan replies to the two articles by Rev. Erwood, which are now here and will be published as soon as they are put in type."

Now, Mr. Editor, since this is your determination in this matter, I take this opportunity to thank you for your generous and fair treatment during this controversy.

I now take leave of my opponent. I am in doubt whether I should say "good-bye" or simply "*au revoir*." I therefore address him in the words of the poet: "Fie thou dishonest Satan; I call thee by the most modest terms, for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy."

I am deeply grateful to you, Mr. Editor, for your unbounded courtesy, and remain,

Most gratefully yours,

F. J. FLANAGAN.



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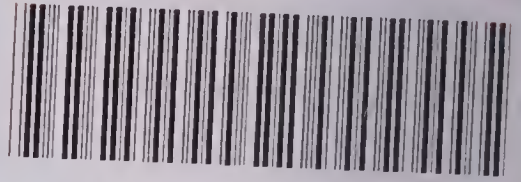
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